MEMORIALS OF OLD SHROPSHIRE

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FLOREAT SALOPIA

MEMORIALS
OF
OLD SHROPSHIRE

THE ABBEY CHURCH *Shrewsbury*

MEMORIALS OF OLD SHROPSHIRE

EDITED BY

THOMAS AUDEN, M.A., F.S.A.

VICAR OF CONDOVER, SALOP, AND RURAL DEAN; PREBENDARY OF
LICHFIELD; CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
SHROPSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY

AUTHOR OF
"*Shrewsbury: A Historical and Topographical Account of the Town,*" *etc.*

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THIS
WORK ON SHROPSHIRE
IS DEDICATED
IN THE WORDS OF THE TIME-HONOURED
TOAST
"TO ALL FRIENDS ROUND
THE WREKIN"

⁂

PREFACE

I SHOULD like by way of preface to say a few words as to what the reader may, and may not, expect to find in the following volume. He must not expect everything that falls under the head of MEMORIALS OF OLD SHROPSHIRE; but if he has the patience to read the volume through, I venture to think he will be in possession of a fairly clear idea of the past history of the county, viewed under several aspects. In the chapters written by myself, and in those contributed by others, I have alike endeavoured to avoid the *scrappiness* which is too apt to attach to a volume like the present. When one knows a county well, there is always the temptation to trot out some particular hobby-horse, or even a whole team of them; in other words, to give exaggerated prominence to some particular place, or person, or family, which may be of great interest to the writer himself or to a few local antiquaries, but is of very little value to the general reader. Such historical problems are of great use in the *Transactions* of a local society, but my desire is that the present volume may be found a readable book, accurate in its history, but as far as possible free from technicalities. With this view I have tried to make each chapter more or less complete in itself. This has occasionally involved a certain amount of repetition, but the viewing of the same incident from a different standpoint, and in a different setting, will, it is believed, only add to its interest, and give completeness to the picture as a whole. It has not appeared desirable to encumber the text to any large extent with foot-notes. The authorities consulted have been many in number, and of very various kinds; some original and some already in print—headed, of course, by the monumental work of Eyton—but the aim of the volume did not seem to call for detailed references except in particular instances. It may be added that every chapter is new, and has been written expressly for the present work, with the exception of that on the old families of the county. This subject the late Mr. Stanley Leighton had made so thoroughly his own that it seemed better to reproduce what he had written than attempt anything new, only bringing up his paper to present date. Miss K. M. Roberts's illustrations may be left to speak for themselves.

It only remains that I should express my warm thanks to those who, by contributions to which their names are appended, or by unacknowledged suggestions, have assisted to give the volume whatever merit it may possess; and to none am I more indebted than to the friend who has compiled the Index, but who in his modesty requests me to withhold his name.

And so—in the words of Chaucer—

> Go, little book; God send thee good passage.

T. A.

CONDOVER VICARAGE,
SHREWSBURY,
November, 1906.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
General Story of the Shire .	By the EDITOR . .	1
The Origin and Evolution of the Towns	By HENRIETTA M. AUDEN, F.R.Hist.S. . . .	25
Religious Movements—Mediæval and Post-Mediæval . . .	By the EDITOR . .	65
Folk-Lore: Legends and Old Customs	By CHARLOTTE S. BURNE	120
Ludlow and the Council of the Marches	By CAROLINE A. J. SKEEL, D.Litt., F.R.Hist.S. .	143
Shropshire and the Civil War, 1642-1646	By JOHN ERNEST AUDEN, M.A.	162
Old Shropshire Families: Changes in Land Ownership . . .	By the late STANLEY LEIGHTON, M.P., F.S.A.	195
Shropshire and its Schools . .	By JOHN ERNEST AUDEN, M.A.	210
Architectural Story: Representative Buildings	By HENRIETTA M. AUDEN, F.R.Hist.S. . . .	236
Illustrious Salopians . . .	By the EDITOR . .	257
Index		275

INDEX TO ILLUSTRATIONS

FULL PAGE

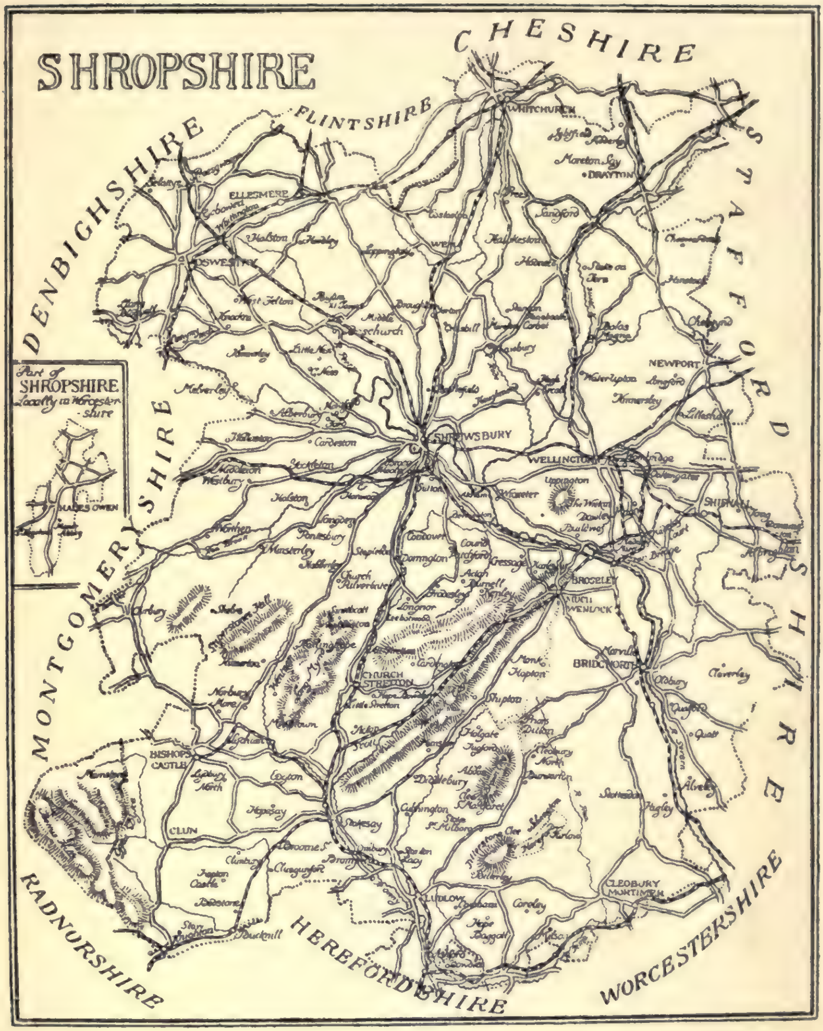
The Abbey Church, Shrewsbury . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

Map of Shropshire 1
Wenlock Priory 14
North Gate, Bridgnorth 18
Old Bridge at Clun 38
Buildwas Abbey 72
Lilleshall Abbey 80
Whittington Castle 128
The Guildhall, Much Wenlock 136
Clun Castle 144
Ludlow Castle 158
Hopton Castle 178
High Ercall Hall 184
The Solar Room, Stokesay Castle 196
Pitchford Hall 202
Carved Figures, Much Wenlock 208
Tong Church (Tomb of Foundress in foreground) . . 212
Haughmond Abbey 232
Stokesay Castle, North Side 240
Madeley Court 246
Bishop Percy's House, Bridgnorth 264
Condover Hall 272

OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

		PAGE
Shrewsbury	(*From an old Engraving*)	2
Stokesay Castle		22
Bridgnorth	(*From an old Engraving*)	32
Effigy in Shifnal Church		70
Ellesmere		129
English Bridge, Shrewsbury	(*From an old Engraving*)	151
Albright Hussey	,, ,,	175
Bridgnorth	(*From an old Water-colour*)	217
Boscobel	(*From an old Engraving*)	249
Bromfield Priory	,, ,,	267


SHROPSHIRE
CHESHIRE
FLINTSHIRE
DENBIGHSHIRE
STAFFORDSHIRE
MONTGOMERYSHIRE
RADNORSHIRE
HEREFORDSHIRE
WORCESTERSHIRE
Part of SHROPSHIRE Locally in Worcestershire
HALESOWEN
WHITCHURCH
Moreton Say
DRAYTON
ELLESMERE
OSWESTRY
Wem
Hodnet
NEWPORT
Longford
Lilleshall
SHREWSBURY
WELLINGTON
Wroxeter
SHIFNAL
BROSELEY
MUCH WENLOCK
BRIDGNORTH
CHURCH STRETTON
BISHOPS CASTLE
CLUN
LUDLOW
CLEOBURY MORTIMER
Alveley
Chirbury
Westbury
Pontesbury
Minsterley
Condover
Longnor
Holgate
Diddlebury
Stokesay
Bromfield
Clungunford
Knighton
Bucknell
Hopesay
Lydbury North
Worthen
Alberbury
Cardeston
Baschurch
Ness
Hadnall
Shawbury
Stanton
Waters Upton
Kinnersley
Upton Magna
Uppington
Dawley
Buildwas
Cressage
Acton Burnell
Kenley
Monk Hopton
Shipton
Morville
Claverley
Quatford
Quatt
Stottesdon
Neen Savage
Farlow
Stoke St Milborough
Culmington
Onibury
Stanton Lacy
Burford
Hope Bagot
Coreley
Caynham
Ashford Carbonell

GENERAL STORY OF THE SHIRE

By the Editor

(1) CELTIC AND SAXON PERIODS

THE history of Shropshire finds its centre of interest in the fact, which it shares with Cheshire on the north and Herefordshire on the south, that it is a border county, and as such has been associated with every wave of conquest which has passed across our island. It is remarkable, however, that it is first mentioned as a shire in connection with the only one of these waves which has practically left no impress upon its territory. It is in connection with the incursions of the Danes that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* tells us that in the year 1006 the king (Ethelred) had gone over Thames into "Scrobbesbyrigscire," and there taken his abode in the midwinter's tide. The form of the name in this earliest mention shows that it followed the analogy of Gloucester and Worcester in being associated with the principal town, for Scrobbesbyrigscire is simply Shrewsburyshire; but under Norman influence the name soon took a softened form. Under the year 1088 the same *Chronicle* speaks of the men of "Scrobscyre," and we probably owe to the same influence the form Salop, which is still used as a designation both of the shire and the principal town. Shrewsbury is the capital of Shropshire, or the county of Salop.

When, however, we undertake to trace the story of Shropshire, we must go back to a period far antecedent to Saxon times. It had its part in invasions long before Jutes and Angles were heard of—at a period when the weapons of warfare were of stone and bronze rather than of iron. No traces of Palæolithic man have been found in the county, but there are fairly numerous remains of the Neolithic period, and of the Bronze and Early Iron age, some of which are to be seen in the museum at Shrewsbury. As might be expected from the difference in physical character, there was at a very early period a difference between the civilization of the level country north of the Severn, and that of the hill country which forms the southern half of the county. The northern part was more easily subdued than the south, and so felt the influence of advancing culture sooner—a state of things

From an] [*Old Engraving.*

SHREWSBURY.

which is evidenced by the fact that almost, if not quite, all the prehistoric implements of bronze have been found north of the river, while those of stone have been found south of it.

Anyone familiar with the peasantry of Shropshire will easily recognize in them the three earliest types which prevailed in Britain. There are specimens of the dark type, which we speak of as Iberian—short of stature with dark hair and eyes and lengthened skulls—and there are still more numerous specimens of the Celtic races which followed—tall and brawny, with red hair and rounded skulls. These Celts, who appear to have come from Central Europe, arrived in Britain in two migrations. First came the Goidels, or Gaels, and when these had driven the Iberian race westward, they themselves were disturbed by the Brythons, and driven westward in turn. Each migration marked increased progress in civilization, but as each race moved towards the mountainous district the contest became more and more fierce, and the earthworks which crown so many of the Shropshire hills show how earnest and deadly the struggle was which took place on its borders.

By degrees, however, there loomed on the horizon of Britain a power more mighty, and a civilization much more advanced. This was the Roman Empire, which first interfered in the affairs of the island under Julius Cæsar in the year B.C. 55. It was not, however, till the middle of the following century that Shropshire was brought into contact with Rome. At that time the western borderland of England was occupied by three principal tribes, though it is impossible to define their exact boundaries. These were the Cornavii on the north, whose territory embraced part of Staffordshire and the northern half at least of Shropshire; to the west and south of them were the Ordovices; and again south of these lay the Silures. These last were of wilder and fiercer manners than the other two, and included a large mixture of the pre-Celtic tribes, a fact which is evidenced by the prevalence to this day of the Iberian type in the valleys of Monmouthshire and Glamorgan. The chief city of the Cornavii was on the Severn, near the spot where it is joined by the Tern, at no great distance from the foot of the Wrekin, on whose height was the camp of refuge to which they might betake themselves and their cattle in case of need. The time, however, had come when their city was to pass into other hands. In the year A.D. 43, the Legions of Rome again appeared in Britain, and this time they came to stay. Advancing northward and westward they reduced to subjection one tribe after another, and in the borderland made their power felt in the establishment of a Roman city on the site occupied by the capital of the Cornavii. To this they gave the name of Viroconium, or Uriconium; and monuments found on the site go to show that its foundation dates from the middle of the first century, when Ostorius Scapula was engaged in a final effort to subdue the British chief Caradoc, or Caractacus. That expedition had important results in various ways, and its immediate issue is thus described by Tacitus:—

> The army next marched against the Silures, who, in addition to the native ferocity of their tribe, placed great hopes in the valour of Caractacus, whom the many changes and prosperous turns of fortune had advanced to a pre-eminence over the rest of the British leaders. He, skilfully availing himself of his knowledge of the country to countervail his inferiority in numbers, transferred the war into the country of the Ordovices, and being joined by those who distrusted the peace subsisting between them and us, soon brought matters to a decisive issue; for he posted himself on a spot to which the approaches were as advantageous to his own party as they were perplexing to us. He then threw up on the more accessible parts of the highest hills a kind of rampart of stone; below and in front of which was a river difficult to ford, and on the works were placed troops of soldiers.[1]

The exact words of the annalist are important, because they are our only guide in fixing the site of this last stand of Caractacus. It will be observed that Tacitus gives three positive data: it was in the country of the Ordovices, and it was on hills difficult of access (*montibus arduis*), on which he threw up a rampart of stone (*in modum valli saxa præstruit*), and which had at the base a river not easy to ford (*amnis vado incerto*). These particulars make it certain that the battle took place within or on the borders of Shropshire, and various suggestions have been made as to the exact spot. The locality, however, which seems to best fulfil the requirements of the passage from Tacitus—the only one, in fact, which can show both a deep river and a stone rampart—is the Breidden hills on the Montgomeryshire border, where its side descends abruptly to the Severn, which winds around its base.

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[1] Tacitus, *Annals* ii. 31 (Giles' translation).

The result of the battle is well known—Caractacus was defeated, and soon after carried to Rome, and Shropshire ceased to cause trouble to the Roman arms. Peace brought with it the development of the arts of peace, and Uriconium became an important centre of commerce. In the city itself, the huts of the Cornavii gave place to stately buildings of stone, including extensive public baths and a great basilica, of which the remnants still exist; while in the neighbourhood wealthy Romans built villas of which the tesselated pavements discovered from time to time attest the importance. From Uriconium as a centre, roads led in all directions, but the tracks which in British days had guided uncertain steps through the forests gave place under Roman rule to paved ways which led straight to their destination, bridging the streams and triumphing over every obstacle. Lead mining was developed in the Stiperstones, and copper at Llanymynech Hill, and these products, together with the fruits of the soil, were articles of commerce which kept the roads well frequented, and brought wealth to the districts through which they passed.

There can be no doubt that the era of the Roman occupation was in many respects a time of prosperity for Shropshire. The wealth, of course, was mainly in the hands of the ruling race, who were probably not always considerate to those they ruled. No doubt it was British labour which reaped the fields and dug into the hills for minerals; no doubt British shoulders bore the stones which paved the roads and gave stateliness to the buildings of the city; but the Romans in return gave them protection and peace, and imparted some at least of the culture which they themselves possessed.

It is impossible to say to what extent this last was the case, and various opinions have been formed, but there can be no doubt as to the advantage of living under a powerful and, on the whole, a beneficent government. And yet this had one drawback, as events proved. There came a time—never anticipated in earlier years—when the Roman power in Britain waned, and her legions were withdrawn to defend territories nearer home. Then it was found that four centuries of peace had made the native races of the island more civilized, but less able to defend themselves when their protectors withdrew. The province had drafted many a brave soldier into the ranks of the legions to fight elsewhere, but the Britons as such had little or no military organization.

They soon found out their need. The last Roman legions left the island in the year 410, and already the clouds of another invasion were beginning to gather. The races of Central Europe who inhabited the lowlands round the mouth of the Elbe—Saxons, Jutes, and Angles; men who went down to the sea in ships, and occupied their business in great waters—began to be restless in their own country, and to seek for other homes across the ocean. At first their invasions of this island were confined to the southern and eastern coasts, but like other invaders before them, they gradually took firmer grip of the land, and pushed their settlements westward and northward. The wave reached Shropshire in the latter half of the sixth century. In the year 577 the West Saxons, under the command of two brothers—Ceawlin and Cutha—gained a great victory over the Britons at Deorham, near Bristol, which gave them possession of the surrounding territory. They then, according to their usual method of proceeding, pushed their way up the valley of the Severn. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* informs us that in 584 the brothers penetrated with their forces as far as a place called Fethanleag—possibly in Cheshire, possibly in Staffordshire—where Cutha was slain; but Ceawlin took many towns and much booty. Among them was almost certainly Uriconium, which he left a smoking ruin. There is a curious legend as to its capture, which is of uncertain origin, but has survived to modern times among the neighbouring peasantry—it is to the effect that the assailants, finding it impossible to break through the walls of the town, collected all the sparrows on which they could lay hands, and attaching lights to them, let them fly. These settled on the thatched roofs of the houses, and so set fire to the whole town, and enabled the enemy in the confusion to enter it without difficulty.[1] Anyway, the destruction was effectual. The inhabitants who survived betook themselves to the loop of the Severn within which Shrewsbury now stands, and the ruins of Uriconium became for centuries to the popular mind a haunted place to be avoided by night, but a quarry by day from which might be taken materials for every form of building in the neighbourhood.

As just stated, it is in connection with the destruction of Uriconium that we get our first glimpse of what is now the county town. Under the name of Pengwern (the knoll of alders), a British settlement already occupied the high ground encircled by the river, and though this appears to have suffered in the same raid which destroyed Uriconium, it quickly recovered, and, re-peopled in part by refugees from the ruins of that city, became a flourishing centre of Celtic power, and the capital of the Princes of Powis.

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[1] Wright's *Uriconium*, p. 80; Miss Burne's *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, p. 100.

Meanwhile the Saxon invaders were growing more and more formidable; they had effected settlements and set up kingdoms in every part of England except along the shores and among the hills of the west. The progress of their subjugation of Shropshire may be traced with some distinctness in the pages of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

After the invasion of the West Saxons under Ceawlin, already described, the next danger came from the north. In the year 606 we are told that "Ethelfrith (of Northumbria) led his army to Chester, and there slew numberless Welsh." Among these were a large body of monks from Bangor Iscoed, "who came thither to pray for the army of the Welsh." The British leader was Brochmail or Scromail, whose home was at Pengwern, and the result of this victory was to cripple the Celtic power in the north of the county, so that in the following reign the Northumbrians were able to attack the British stronghold of Caer Digoll, whose earthworks still crown the summit of the Long Mountain on the borders of the county.

Meanwhile another kingdom was rising in the centre of England—that of Mercia. Its rulers were ambitious and aggressive, and it soon came into conflict with other kingdoms of the invasion. In 642 the *Chronicle* records that "Oswald, King of the Northumbrians, was slain by Penda, the Southumbrian (Mercian), at Maserfield, on the Nones of August." This battle almost certainly took place near Oswestry,[1] which derives its name from Oswald's tree, and it marked a conflict not merely for military supremacy between two kingdoms, but between heathenism and Christianity. King Oswald is better known as St. Oswald, who had done all he could to introduce and foster the Christian Faith in his kingdom.

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[1] *Shropshire Archæological Society's Transactions*, vol. ii., p. 97.

Penda, on the other hand, was the champion of the old paganism which the invaders had brought with them from beyond the seas; and the defeat and death of Oswald was disastrous because it rolled back for a time the spread of the religion of Christ. It was only, however, for a time. The missions which Oswald had fostered in the north sent out fresh emissaries southward, and before any long time Shropshire accepted Christianity at their hands.

At this period the kingdom of Wessex, after being for a considerable time subject to Mercia, again asserted itself. Turning once more to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, we read under the date 661:—

> In this year Kenwealh [King of Wessex] fought at Easter at Posentesbyrig, and Wulfhere, son of Penda, laid the country waste as far as Aescesdun.

Posentesbyrig is clearly Pontesbury, whose hill is still crowned with an extensive earthwork, and Aescesdun is probably to be identified with one of the numerous Astons which are dotted over almost the whole county.

The victory put the West Saxons in possession of an important valley watered by the Rea, in which many of them effected settlements,[1] and from this time the conquest of the shire was as complete as it ever became. All the river valleys had now been explored, and everywhere clearings were effected in the forests. Villages with their stockaded "burh," and their place of "folkmoot," surrounded by their village ground and pasture land, grew up in every direction, and became the rudiments of the villages and townships which form the principal features of country life to this day.

The extent of this Saxon settlement of Shropshire may be easily traced by a study of the place-names which survive. It will be found that these are English over most of the county, but in the district known as Clun Forest on the south-west, and in the hill country at the back of Oswestry, they are very largely Welsh, showing that these two districts were never really taken possession of by the Saxons, but retained through all changes their old Celtic inhabitants. It only remained for Offa, who reigned over Mercia from 757 to 796, to consolidate the Saxon power in the border country by wresting Pengwern from the Britons and—pushing their boundary further back—to mark and secure the territory thus acquired. This he did by the great earthwork which he constructed, or in part adapted, extending from the mouth of the Dee to that of the Wye, which still bears the name of Offa's Dyke, and remains comparatively perfect in some parts of the county. His reign was also marked by a change of name in the case of the county town, such as must have taken place also with many less important settlements. Pengwern (the knoll of alders), when it passed into Saxon hands became Scrobbesbyrig (the settlement among the shrubs), a name which, like its previous designation, was derived from the character of its site; and this, in various softened forms, has remained its name to this day.

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[1] For the effects of the different Saxon invasions on the language and customs of the county, *cf.* Miss Burne's *Folk-Lore*, pp. 618-19.

The wave of Danish invasion which rolled over England during the next two centuries, scarcely touched Shropshire. As already mentioned, the name occurs first in connection with it, but only incidentally. The first Danish fleet, consisting of only three vessels, arrived on the southern shore of England towards the close of Offa's reign, but this was but the beginning of Viking invasion and devastation. From that period almost up to the Norman Conquest, the pages of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are largely a record of monasteries plundered, churches destroyed, and forces routed by this formidable foe. It contains two entries besides that already alluded to, in which Shropshire is specially concerned. In the year 894, during the reign of Alfred the Great, we are told that the Danes "went up along the Thames until they reached the Severn, then up along the Severn." This apparently means that they penetrated up the Thames valley to the foot of the Cotswolds, and then crossed that ridge into the Severn valley somewhere in the neighbourhood of Gloucester. The account goes on to say that the "earldorman Ethered" and others collected an army, which included "some parts of the North Welsh race," and "when they were all gathered together they followed after the (Danish) army to Buttington on the bank of the Severn, and there beset them on every side in a fastness." After some weeks of siege, by which the Danes were reduced to great straits of hunger, an engagement took place, and "the Christians had the victory." The village of Buttington lies just outside the present boundaries of Shropshire at the foot of the Long Mountain, and those who are familiar with the Severn Valley at that point will know how wisely Ethered and his allies chose their place of attack. Apparently few of the Danes survived to tell the tale. As late as the year 1839 a large quantity of skulls and other human remains were discovered at the spot, which were evidently relics of some such struggle.

In the year 896 the invaders were again in this part of the country. Having been obliged to abandon their ships on the Lea near London, by the defences which King Alfred had erected between them and the sea, they made their way again across the kingdom. "They went overland," the *Chronicle* tells us, "until they arrived at Quatbridge on the Severn, and there wrought a work," that is, constructed a fort. "They then sat that winter at Bridge." There is no difficulty in identifying these places: "Bridge" is Bridgnorth, which has near it the village of "Quatford," and the occurrence is still further perpetuated by the name "Danesford" on the river itself. The invaders, however, had no opportunity of effecting permanent settlements. Ethered, whom Alfred had made earldorman of Mercia, kept a vigilant watch on behalf of the king, and in this he was ably seconded by his wife Ethelfleda, who was the king's daughter. She survived her husband some years, but the defence of her territory did not suffer by his death. She erected fortresses at Bridgnorth and Chirbury, and under the title "Lady of the Mercians," won wide regard. She was traditionally the founder of the church dedicated to St. Alkmund in the county town.

The best proof, however, of the statement that the Danish invasion left no impress on the county, is to be found in a study of the place names. There is an entire absence of names ending in "by" and "thorpe," and "thwaite," for example, with which we are so familiar in the north and east of England. Danish blood has contributed nothing to the making of the Salopian character.

(2) NORMAN

In 1066 came the Norman invasion under William the Conqueror. It had been already prepared for by the weak rule of Edward the Confessor, who had largely given himself over to Norman influence, and in whose reign the Norman Richard FitzScrob had erected a castle on the southern border of this county, which was a centre of oppression to the neighbourhood, and gave its name to the modern village of Richard's Castle. William claimed the crown of England as the appointed heir of Edward the Confessor, but the title universally given to him of "the Conqueror," embodies the true facts of the case. He was no ordinary man. Known at first as William the Bastard, he had, while yet a youth, to overcome opposition in his native duchy which would have overwhelmed the majority of men, but which only served to bring out the force of his character. Every one is familiar with his invasion of England in September, 1066, and the result of the Battle of Senlac or Hastings. His victory was so complete that he was crowned the following Christmas at Westminster Abbey, then fresh from the hands of its founder, Edward the Confessor; and though in many parts of the country the submission to him was merely nominal, he was able soon after to return to Normandy. He chose as Regents in his absence his half-brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, whom he created Earl of Kent, and William FitzOsbern, whom he made Earl of Hereford. They had the sternness of William without his wisdom, and the result of their rule was an outbreak of rebellion in various parts of the country. The leader of resistance to the Norman power in the west midlands was Edric Sylvaticus, or Wild Edric, who held considerable possessions in South Shropshire and Herefordshire. In alliance with the Welsh he led the men of Shropshire, Hereford, and Cheshire against Shrewsbury, where the Norman power had already established itself, and laid siege to it. Their success, however, seems to have been only partial, and after burning part of the town they retired. The incident illustrates the weak place of all the resistance to William, which was that the efforts were detached and isolated from one another, and so William, by attacking his enemies in detail, overcame one after another, until his power was firmly established.

Among those who helped him and contributed to bring about this result was his friend and kinsman Roger de Montgomery, and William rewarded him with large possessions both in the south and west. He made him first of all Earl of Arundel, and then at a later period appointed him Earl of Shrewsbury, accompanying the latter appointment with lands which practically embraced the whole of Shropshire. As the result, Roger took up his abode at Shrewsbury, and erected a castle on the isthmus between the two arms of the Severn. Nothing of his work now remains except, perhaps, a portion of the entrance gateway, but it was sufficiently formidable to overawe the surrounding district.

Roger's personal rule seems to have varied somewhat according to the domestic influences brought to bear on him. During the *regime* of his first wife, Mabel de Belesme, who was cruel and oppressive, his policy ran in the same direction; but after her murder by those who had suffered from her rapacity, Roger married Adeliza de Puiset, who was a woman of very different character. Under her influence, his rule was milder, and in particular he founded various religious houses, including the Cluniac Priory of Wenlock and the Benedictine Abbey of Shrewsbury.

Meanwhile, however, the Earl was growing old. His friend and patron, William the Conqueror, died in 1087; and in 1094, finding his own health failing, he retired to the Abbey he had founded, and enrolling himself as a brother, died there, and was buried near to the High Altar of the Monastic Church. A tomb is still shown there as his monument, but the effigy belongs to a later date than his death.

The social changes wrought in Shropshire by the Norman conquest were great, as shown by a study of the Domesday survey. The county was at that time divided into fifteen hundreds, each consisting of a number of manors, whose owners and their tenants are recorded, together with the value of each as it was then, and as it had been in the reign of Edward the Confessor. Earl Roger was the owner—or strictly, tenant *in capite*—of all but a very few manors, which belonged to the Bishop of Chester and Ralph de Mortimer respectively, and those who held under any of the three, almost without exception, bore Norman names; a few were held by ecclesiastical bodies. Among the sub-tenants were a small number who appear from their names to be Saxon, but it is clear that the dispossession of those who had owned the land in the time of King Edward was very complete. It was impossible for this change to take place without injustice and hardship of the severest kind at the time when it was effected, but it had its redeeming features. The Normans

WENLOCK PRIORY :

were more thrifty and temperate in their personal habits, more able to adapt themselves to new circumstances and to assimilate what was good in their surroundings, than those whom they dispossessed. The result was that the Normans supplied the element of organization which the Saxons had lacked, and no long period elapsed before the two were fused into one powerful nation. "The English tongue and the English law held their own throughout the realm, and within a century the French baron had become an English lord."[1]

As regards Shropshire itself, though this gradual fusion was going on underneath, the century which followed the death of the Conqueror was largely one of trouble and unrest. The reign of Henry I. was disturbed by the rebellion of Robert de Belesme, the eldest son of Roger de Montgomery, who appears to have inherited the bad qualities of his mother, Roger's first wife. Espousing the cause of Robert Curthose on the death of William Rufus, Belesme raised a formidable rebellion against Henry. He was besieged by the King in his castle of Bridgnorth, but escaped to Shrewsbury. Having reduced the garrison left behind at Bridgnorth, the King followed him to Shrewsbury, making his way over Wenlock Edge by a new road which he caused to be formed for the purpose, and so arriving before Belesme was prepared. Henry accepted his submission, and contented himself with banishing him from the kingdom, but he carried his turbulent spirit with him, and a few years later the King seized an opportunity of arresting him, and he ended his days a prisoner in the castle of Wareham.

Henry paid other visits to Shropshire later on in his reign. Two documents issued by him bear date at Norton, in the parish of Condover, and Shrewsbury received from him privileges which are alluded to and confirmed in an extant Charter of King John. It is almost certain that the county also benefited in another way by his administrative ability. A comparison of the Hundreds of Shropshire, as they appear in Domesday, and as they existed a century later, shows that there had been wise revision and re-arrangement of their boundaries, by which their administration was rendered more easy. It cannot, indeed, be proved that this was actually the work of Henry, but it was at least work which would be congenial to one who gained the name of Beauclerc by his learning and acquirements; and he knew the county so intimately that he might well choose it for the exercise of his administrative skill.

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[1] *Social England* (1st ed.), vol. i., p. 243.

In 1135, however, Henry died, and twenty years of anarchy followed, in which Shropshire bore its share of suffering. The right to the throne was contested between Matilda, or Maud, the daughter of Henry, and Stephen of Blois, the grandson of the Conqueror through the female line; and this disputed succession gave an opportunity for a display of all the worst features of the feudal system. Barons everywhere erected castles, which became centres of oppression and lawlessness, which there was no central power with sufficient authority to control. Most of the Shropshire nobles seem to have espoused the cause of Matilda. The castles of Ellesmere, Whittington, Ludlow, and Shrewsbury are all mentioned as garrisoned for the Empress, and of these Shrewsbury sustained a siege in 1138 by Stephen himself, who succeeded in capturing it, and he put the garrison to the sword. He had not, however, the tact to reap any advantages from his success, and at last, in utter weariness, an agreement was come to by which Stephen should hold the crown for his life, but that it should then pass to Henry, the son of Matilda.

The anarchy was productive of two good results: the need of a refuge for the weak led to the development of monastic life and a large increase of religious houses; and the insecurity of the country led to the enlargement of the towns, and their growth in importance and influence.

Neither development, indeed, was an unmixed good, but for the time the one secured a home for piety and learning, and the other laid the foundation of liberty and trade.

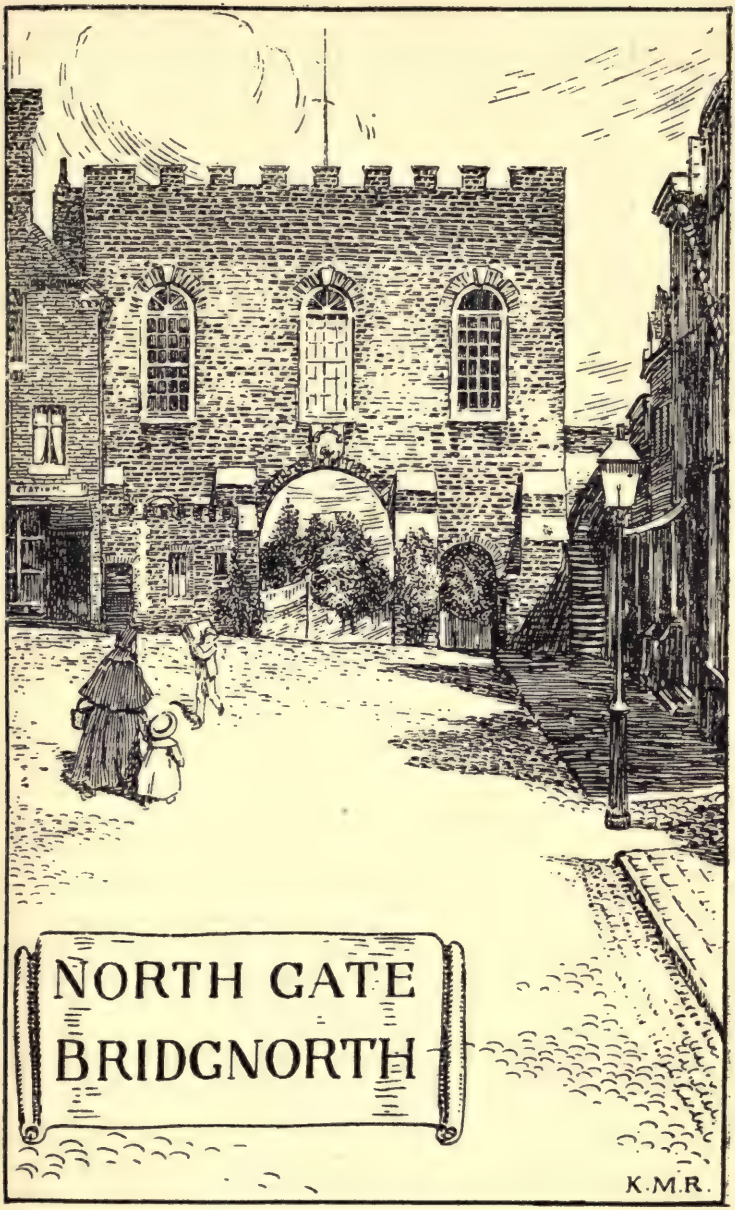
(3) PLANTAGENET

Henry II. succeeded to the throne in 1154. The difficulties which confronted him were enough to daunt the spirit of a man as young as he was at the time, but they only served to bring out the force that was latent in his character. His first work was to lessen the power of the barons by reducing the number of their castles. Among those who resisted the king's wishes in this respect was Hugh de Mortimer, who held castles at Cleobury Mortimer and Bridgnorth in this county, and Wigmore just over the Herefordshire border. Henry laid siege to these in turn, and Mortimer made his submission at Bridgnorth in July, 1155.

Meanwhile the Welsh were becoming increasingly troublesome, and from this period till their final subjugation by Edward I., the records of Shropshire are largely concerned with their incursions, and the efforts made to keep them under control.

Henry II. was in North Wales in 1157, and in South Wales the year following, and he made a further expedition against his troublesome neighbours in 1165, but none of these efforts achieved more than a partial and temporary success. The same may be said of the efforts of John and of Henry III. In the reigns of both these last mentioned, the prince who ruled in North Wales was Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, known as Llewelyn the Great; and though John endeavoured to attach him to himself by giving him his natural daughter Joan in marriage, he continued to be a scourge to Shropshire as long as he lived. The Welsh supported the barons in extorting from John the Magna Charta at Runnymede, but Shrewsbury continued loyal to the king, probably in part from the fact that he had conferred on the town no less than three charters. Llewelyn marched against it, and took possession of it, but only held it for a few months. It was destined, however, again to feel that prince's power at a later period. One of the last acts of his reign was to lay waste the surrounding country up to its very gates.

So matters went on till the sceptre fell from the weak hands of Henry III., and passed into those of Edward I. The chief power in Wales at this time was wielded by Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, a grandson of Llewelyn the Great, of whom he was a worthy descendant. He had measured swords with Edward during the rebellion of Simon de Montfort, before his accession to the throne, and had shown himself an adversary worthy of his steel. When Edward became king, Llewelyn first delayed, and at last refused, to do homage, and Edward marched against him, and with the co-operation of his brother David, effected his submission. As the result, however, of the attempt to introduce English law and custom into Wales, rebellion again broke out under the joint leadership of Llewelyn and David, the latter having forsworn his allegiance to the king. Edward determined once for all to crush the turbulence of Wales, and he succeeded. Llewelyn fell in an obscure skirmish near Builth, and a few months later, in June, 1283, David was betrayed into the king's hands, and sent in chains to Shrewsbury. Here a parliament was called to consider his case, and he was sentenced to be executed with various marks of barbarity. This Shrewsbury parliament is, however, chiefly famous as marking a great step in constitutional government. For the first time representatives of the Commons took part in the deliberations by legal authority. During its session in Shrewsbury the king probably stayed at Acton Burnell with his friend and chancellor, Robert Burnell, Bishop of Bath and Wells, and when the parliament had dealt with David, its meeting was adjourned to Acton Burnell itself,


NORTH GATE
BRIDGNORTH
STATION
K.M.R.

where it passed an important statute dealing with the recovery of debts.

Edward followed up the subjugation of Wales by the erection of a large number of border castles, of which the ruins of many still survive. These served the double purpose of overawing the Welsh and protecting the English who were encouraged to settle among them, and their ruins are an abiding memorial that the power of Wales as an independent nation was permanently crushed.

The century which followed the death of Edward I. was comparatively uneventful to Shropshire, but in 1403 it again came into notice. Political affairs were at the time in a very unsettled condition. The Scots were causing trouble in the north, and Owen Glyndwr was in rebellion in Wales, while the tenure of the crown by Henry IV. had on it the taint of usurpation. In July of that year, the Percys, who had been the mainstay of Henry's power in the north, threw off their allegiance and marched southward against him. Their forces, led by Hotspur, son of the Earl of Northumberland, met those of the king near Shrewsbury, and on the spot now marked by the church of Battlefield, a fierce contest took place. The result was a great victory for the king. Hotspur was himself slain, with an unusually large number of distinguished men on both sides, and a blow was struck at feudalism from which it never wholly recovered. The interest of the battle of Shrewsbury will, however, always find its centre not in prose, but in verse; not in the pages of the chronicler, but in those of the dramatist. Shakespeare has immortalized the contest in his *Henry IV.*, and by his creation of the character of Falstaff has given us a fictitious hero who is better known than the real heroes of the fight. Those who remember little about the king or Hotspur are well acquainted with the deeds and sayings of that fat and doughty knight.

After another half century of tranquillity, the county was called to bear its part in the Wars of the Roses.

Richard, Duke of York, the father of Edward IV., paid several visits to Shropshire, and was so great a favourite in Shrewsbury that his statue, which now fills a niche in the Old Market Hall, was set up over the gate which gave admission at the Welsh Bridge. At the time of his death, his son Edward was staying in Shrewsbury, and it was from thence he marched southward, and by his victory over the Lancastrian forces at Mortimer's Cross, near Ludlow, secured for himself possession of the throne.

After a troubled reign of twenty-two years, Edward IV. died in 1483, and his power passed into the hands of his son, a child of eleven. The reign of Edward V., as might be expected from the temper of the times, was merely nominal. Before three months had elapsed, his uncle Richard usurped the throne, and the boy king, along with his little brother (who had been born at Shrewsbury), was smothered in the Tower of London. Richard III., however, was not long to enjoy his usurped authority. Henry, Earl of Richmond, claimed the throne, and in August, 1485, landed at Milford Haven to assert his claim. Thence he directed his course to Shrewsbury, where he slept at the house near the top of the Wyle Cop, which still remains, and so on to Bosworth Field, where Richard was defeated and slain, and he succeeded as Henry VII., the first king of the House of Tudor.

(4) TUDOR

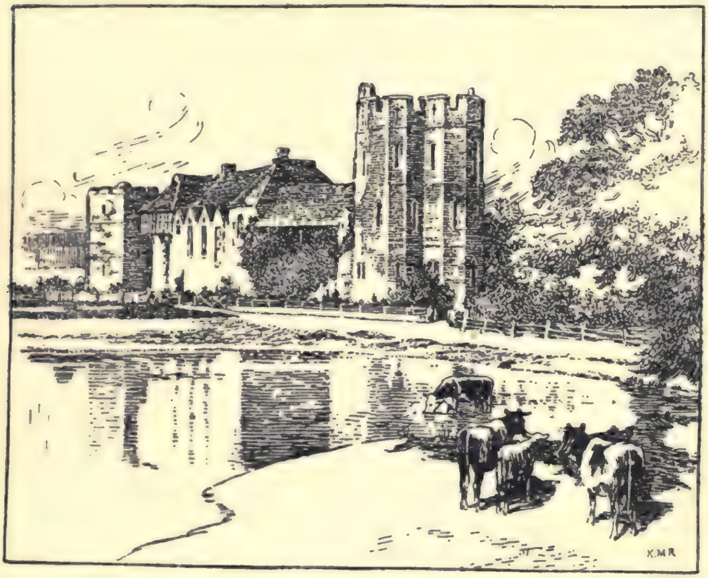
During this period the history of Shropshire mainly centres in two movements, one wholly political, the other both political and religious; the former was the foundation and development of the Court of the Marches, the latter was the movement which we know as the Reformation. Each of these will form a subject of treatment in another part of this volume, and so it will be sufficient in this place to mention that the Court of the Marches had its origin in the reign of

Edward IV., who appointed a council to assist his son as Prince of Wales, which should curb the power of the Lords Marchers and secure justice for the Welsh. It was consolidated and made a permanent institution by Henry VII., whose eldest son Arthur held court at Ludlow with his bride Katharine of Arragon. The best known of those who filled the office of President of the Council were Rowland Lee, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, who was appointed in 1534, and who, on his death at Shrewsbury, in 1542, was buried in St. Chad's Church; and Sir Henry Sidney, appointed in 1559, whose son, Sir Philip Sidney, was one of the distinguished *alumni* of Shrewsbury School. The Court lasted till 1689, but for some considerable period before that date had lost its original importance.

(5) STUART AND HANOVERIAN

Shropshire had its full share in the incidents of the Civil War between Charles I. and the Parliament, and the Oak at Boscobel, within its boundaries—as recorded in an inscription at its base—"had the honour of sheltering from his foes his Majesty King Charles II." after the battle of Worcester. As this period, however, will also receive a special record in another part of the volume, any detailed account of the strife is omitted here. Suffice it to say that in the early years of the contest, at any rate, Shropshire for the most part was Royalist. Charles I. paid a visit to Shrewsbury almost immediately after raising his standard at Nottingham, in August, 1642, and evidently regarded the county as one of those in which his cause was strongest. The castles and country houses were nearly all garrisoned—the majority for the king—but various causes combined to weaken his hold, and in spite of the brilliant exploits of Prince Rupert and the more solid work of men like Sir Francis Ottley, the Governor of Shrewsbury, the Royalist cause gradually lost ground till the battle of Worcester made its ruin for a while complete.

In due time, however, came the reaction, and in 1660 Charles II. was called to his ancestral throne amid the acclamations of the people. Their hopes were not destined to be wholly realized, for want of tact was bound up in the very nature of the Stuarts, but it remained for James II. to exhibit this characteristic in the form most objectionable to the English people. By his own change of religion, and by his arbitrary measures, carried out by men like Judge Jeffreys, he aroused a jealousy for the liberties of the nation, which was only satisfied by his exile.



STOKESAY CASTLE.

Shropshire did not feel the immediate effects of these changes to any marked degree. Shrewsbury was one of the towns from which, at the close of the reign of Charles II., was demanded the surrender of its charter, and this was returned by James in a form which provoked strong feeling against his claim to arbitrary power, but it was also one of the towns which he honoured with a personal visit. Jeffreys, too, was connected with the county. He was educated at Shrewsbury School, where there exists a portrait much more pleasing than might be expected from his character and actions, and it was as Baron of Wem that he was raised to the peerage. He does not, however, appear to have ever made it his home.

Since the Revolution the story of the shire has been for the most part uneventful. The Court of the Marches, as already mentioned, was abolished in 1689, and gradually everything which gave a distinct mark to the public life of the county passed away. But it has maintained a character of its own all through, as is easily recognized by any who have lived both in Shropshire and in other parts of the midlands or the north. Local life and local feeling have been, and still are, strong in Shropshire. This has arisen partly from its distance from the Metropolis, and it showed itself especially in the eighteenth century. Then the towns, and particularly Shrewsbury and Ludlow, had each its own season, for which the county families went into residence, as they now go to London. As a tourist, who stayed at Ludlow in 1772, said of that town, there were to be found there "abundance of pretty ladies," "provisions extremely plentiful and cheap," and "very good company."[1] Since that period Shropshire has been brought into closer contact with the outer world, firstly by the rise of coaches, and more recently by that of railways, but—in conjunction to some extent with the two neighbouring shires of Chester and Hereford—it has maintained its individuality more than most counties. Bishop Creighton showed his usual true historic instinct as well as his knowledge of facts when he said of Shropshire:—

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[1] *Salopian Shreds and Patches*, vol. i., p. 104. For the social life of the county town, *cf.* the Author's *Shrewsbury*, pp. 213-244.

> It shows the growth of agricultural prosperity in a fertile district, which became prosperous as soon as it was freed from disorder. It shows how the baronial civilisation of early times gave way before the changed conditions of the country which began in the reigns of the Tudor Kings. It still bears on its surface the traces of the gradual progress of English society in a region where local life was strong, and where its course had been but slightly affected by the development of modern industry, which in other counties has nearly obliterated the records of the past.[1]

THOMAS AUDEN.

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[1] Creighton, *Some English Shires*, p. 209.

THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF THE TOWNS

BY HENRIETTA M. AUDEN, F.R.HIST.S.

TIMES have changed since the days when the Roman city of Uriconium probably represented the only town within the limits of what is now the county of Salop. If there were other considerable centres of population in the district they have completely vanished and left no trace behind. The Saxon invaders swept away the relics of Roman civilization, and in their dread of magical influences avoided the sites of the Roman villas and towns. Refugees from Uriconium established themselves where Shrewsbury now stands defended by the curve of the Severn, and for about a hundred years Pengwern was an outpost of the Celt against the Saxon. After its conquest by Offa it still retained its importance, but the Anglo-Saxon borough was not much more than a village on a larger scale. The burgesses of Shrewsbury had their fields to till and cattle to herd, and the diggings of foundations have gone to show that cattle were watered where now the Post Office stands, and a farmyard occupied the site of the Shire Hall. Men met at the town for market in time of peace, and in time of war they could take refuge within the fortified peninsula. The burgesses were the king's men, and held their town by service of guarding the king when he came to Shrewsbury. Twelve burgesses of the better sort kept watch over him, and when he went hunting, those that had horses went with him. The Sheriff sent thirty-six men to drive the game for the king, and when the hunt was in Marsley Park, they were bound for eight days to serve there.

At the time of the Domesday survey of England, in 1086, only eighty towns are mentioned, of which Shrewsbury is one. None of the other Shropshire towns were then more than villages, unless it were Ludlow, and though there are coins extant minted at Ludlow, the Domesday record makes no mention of its status as a borough. The account of Shrewsbury, on the other hand, is very complete, and tells us that there were three "moneyers" there, and what they paid to the king; what dues were paid by the burgesses; and how, when the king left the town, the sheriff sent twenty-four horses with him as far as Leintwardine if he went south, or the first stage in Staffordshire if he went that way.

Under the Norman Earl, Roger de Montgomery, a kinsman of the Conqueror, the castle was enlarged, the site of fifty houses being given up to it. Fifty more houses lay waste in 1086; forty-three were inhabited by "francigeni," who do not seem to have paid the same taxes as the "Angligeni," and thirty-nine burgesses had been given by the Earl to the Abbey he had just founded. The calculation in Domesday says that there were 193 houses which paid nothing out of the 252 of which Shrewsbury consisted in the days of Edward the Confessor. The population of the Saxon town can hardly have reached 1,300 souls, but there were four churches within the borough and a fifth just outside its area. To this town, already possessing an important place in the life of the county, Earl Roger added not only a castle that might at the same time protect and overawe the burgesses, but also a great abbey at their gates. Later times saw the erection of a strong town wall of stone and the steady growth of municipal life, but that we have not space to fully chronicle.

Shrewsbury thus existed before either castle or abbey, and was comparatively little affected by their proximity. The influence of the Abbot was mainly confined to the suburb of the Abbey Foregate, where the inhabitants were chiefly his tenants, and the castle, passing from the hands of the Norman earls to those of the king, was frequently entrusted to his faithful burgesses. Robert de Belesme, the last Norman earl, is credited with building the first stone wall of Shrewsbury, but it was not till the town had passed from his hands to those of the king that we hear of much progress in the town's prosperity. Henry I. diminished the heavy rent paid by the burgesses, and granted them many privileges, which were confirmed by his great-grandson, King John, in his first charter to the town. Shrewsbury was visited by Henry I. in time of peace, and by Stephen in time of war, when he besieged and took the castle. Henry II. was there more than once, and ratified the privileges given by Henry I., and we learn from Giraldus Cambrensis that some degree of comfort was to be found in Shrewsbury in 1188, when he and Archbishop Baldwin came there to rest themselves after their Welsh journeyings.

In the reign of Richard I. the burgesses were allowed to hold the town under the king by a yearly rent of forty marks of silver, and King John in his second charter authorized their plan of self-government by two provosts chosen from among the burgesses, and a common council. A third charter of King John further confirmed the status of the town, and probably the burgesses felt that the privileges were well worth the hundred marks that were paid for the charters. In 1209 we see a trace of the trade of the town in an ordinance forbidding the sale in the town of raw hides or undressed cloth except by those assized and talliaged with the burgesses.

The wars with Wales made royal visits to Shrewsbury of frequent occurrence, and the Castle still shows the round towers that marked the military architecture of the reign of Edward I. On September 30th, 1283, in the Parliament summoned by Edward I. to meet at Shrewsbury, there were one hundred and ten earls and barons, two knights from each shire, and two deputies each from twenty of the principal towns of the kingdom, of which Shrewsbury was one. The Parliament condemned David, Prince of Wales, to death, and then adjourned to Acton Burnell. After the submission of Wales, the town lost in military importance, but gained in civil, though the population continued small, judged from our modern standards. In 1313, 188 laymen were taxed in the town for the fifteenth granted to the king. Only one ecclesiastic is mentioned—the Prior of St. John's Hospital; so the population apparently numbered, within the walls of the town itself, not many more than one thousand. Nearly all those burgesses taxed possessed live stock, horses, cattle, or pigs, especially the latter, which down to the time of Elizabeth ran at will in the streets, and were probably useful as scavengers.

The Gild Merchant of the town, which was in existence before the close of the twelfth century, grew in power and importance as time went on, and by degrees the separate crafts possessed their own gilds, the chief among which were those of the Drapers and of the Shearmen, the former of whom were merchants of Welsh cloth, and the latter the preparers of it for the English market.

Under Richard II. the town made progress in self-government, and probably a fire which in 1394 burnt St. Chad's Church and a considerable part of the town caused the building of better houses than the borough had before possessed. Three years later the king adjourned a parliament from Westminster to Shrewsbury, coming there from Lilleshall Abbey in state on January 29th, and remaining there till after the 6th of February. The townsmen suffered much from the disorderly followers of the king, and when Henry of Lancaster usurped the throne they were among his earliest adherents. He had been present with the king at the Shrewsbury Parliament, and probably won popularity in the town at that time.

From the days of Henry IV. onward the business of the town prospered, and Shrewsbury perhaps attained its greatest importance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The half-timbered houses of the latter date testify to the prosperity of the townsmen, and more than one Shrewsbury burgess bought a country estate and founded a family. The reigns of the Tudors were times of prosperity, and the old Market Hall still stands as it was built in 1596. The Civil Wars injured the town in many ways, and brought about the dismantling of the castle under James II., and the eighteenth century saw the decline of the trade in Welsh cloth, and the crystallising of the town into what it now is: a centre of all county business, and of much importance as a market for agricultural produce, with social life of its own, and an atmosphere of calm respectability and absence of bustle. Shrewsbury is the embodiment of the word "town" to all the villages round about, but it stands completely apart from the present-day ideal set forth in a busy manufacturing centre, of which Birmingham, for instance, is an embodiment.

LUDLOW.—Ludlow, though a town before the days of the Conqueror, became overshadowed by the great baronial castle founded within its precincts. There seems little doubt that an early tumulus, from which its name is derived, formed the centre of a Saxon town sufficiently important to possess a mint, and that the fact mentioned in Domesday that "Lude" possessed a bailiff (*præpositus*) goes to show the existence of the borough in 1086. The Domesday Book does not mention the castle, which was probably built by Roger de Lacy soon after the compilation of that record, though tradition assigns it to Earl Roger de Montgomery. In the reign of Henry II. mention is made of burgesses of Ludlow, and in 1221 the town was represented at the Assizes by the Provost and twelve jurors. Eleven years after this a plan was formed for enclosing the town with a wall, and six years later the borough is mentioned as possessing its court distinct from that of Walter de Lacy, the lord of the castle. In 1260, Geoffrey de Genevill, then lord of Ludlow, was empowered to levy tolls for five years towards the walling of the town.

The borough suffered a good deal at the hands of its powerful neighbours, and the records of the thirteenth century show not a few instances of trouble with the retainers of the neighbouring barons. For example, on St. Laurence's Day (August 10th), 1274, at Ludlow Fair, three men, one the Beadle of Cleobury Mortimer, arrested and wished to take to prison at Cleobury, Roger Tyrel, the keeper of Galdeford Gate. In his capacity as gatekeeper he had refused to let the men pass with the oxen they had bought at the Fair unless they showed their tallies. They set upon him, wounded him, and took away his weapon, and were in the act of taking him with them as a prisoner when the Bailiff of Ludlow and his serjeants came upon the scene. The Bailiff of Stottesdon Hundred and his following took the side of the Cleobury men, and tried to arrest the Bailiff of Ludlow when he ordered Roger to be released. Altogether we have the picture of a very stormy fair day, and do not envy the gate-keeper his post.

The chief trade of Ludlow was cloth, and one of the first burgesses of Shropshire who built himself a house and acquired an estate in the country was Laurence de Ludlow, who, having made a fortune as a cloth merchant in that town, bought Stokesay. He received the royal license to crenellate it (*i.e.*, make it a fortified manor house) in 1290. The prosperity of Ludlow probably began in the twelfth century, for in 1199 the church was considered too small for the town. Apparently the first church had been a little Saxon sanctuary built to

Christianise the mound that had been a place of mark in heathen times. Mediæval clergy had little regard for the works of those who had lived before them, and in order to lengthen their church to the eastward they carted away the tumulus, and finding in it three early interments, pronounced the bodies to be those of Irish saints, and placed them in triumph in their new church. Probably the fact of the De Lacy lords of Ludlow having estates in Ireland accounted for the supposed nationality of the saints.

The formation of the Court of the Marches under Edward IV. tended to make the town more and more an appanage of the castle, holding the same relation to it in its degree as the town of Windsor does to Windsor Castle.

Leland, in the first half of the sixteenth century, gives a long description of Ludlow, and speaks of it as "fair-walled" with five gates; and Camden says that there "the Lord President doth keep his Courts, which seldom slacken in business."

BRIDGNORTH.—The first borough to be founded in Shropshire after the Conquest was at Quatford, where Roger de Montgomery, at the request of his second wife, the Countess Adeliza, built a church in honour of St. Mary Magdalene, and a house for himself, with a town round about them. This foundation lasted barely forty years before it was transferred to Bridgnorth, which was founded by Earl Robert de Belesme in 1102, when he built the castle there and transferred to that site the castle and borough his father, Earl Roger, had founded at Quatford in the manor of Erdington. The neighbourhood had seen an encampment of the Danes in the winter of 896, and Ethelfleda, the Lady of Mercia, had built a castle in 913 at Oldbury, the mound of which still remains. The chronicler, Florence of Worcester, says that men worked night and day to build the Castle of Bridge (Brug), and in 1102 it was strong enough to stand siege from the king's forces for thirty days. After the fall of Earl Robert, Brug passed into the king's hands, and remained a royal fortress for the greater part of its existence.

The borough did not grow up under the shadow of the castle, but was transferred, with what inhabitants and privileges it already possessed, from Quatford. Ordericus, in his account of the fact, calls it a town (*oppidum*), and the Domesday record of Quatford speaks of a borough (*burgus*) there. Henry I. attached the town to himself by the grant of various privileges, which were recognised in 1157 by his grandson Henry II. in a charter recited in subsequent grants. Two years later the only Shropshire towns that were assessed for a gift (*donum*) to the king were Shrewsbury and Brug, the former paying fifty and the latter ten marks. The following year Shrewsbury, Brug, and Newport paid forty, twelve, and one-and-a-half

From an] [*Old Engraving.*

BRIDGNORTH.

marks respectively for another similar *donum*. Before the end of the twelfth century the burgesses freed themselves from the control of the Sheriff of Shropshire, and became responsible to the king for the annual *ferm* of ten marks (£6 13s. 4d.) from the town. In addition to this yearly sum, the towns were constantly required to pay levies to the king to meet special exigencies. These tallages seem to have been generally assessed at the rate of Shrewsbury paying three times as much as Brug, which is probably an indication of their relative size and importance. In 1215, the burgesses were allowed wood out of Morf Forest for the fortification of their town, and in 1220 they had a grant of tolls for four years, being allowed to charge ½d. on every Shropshire cart bringing articles into the town for sale, and 1d. on a cart from any other county. Other tolls are also mentioned on pack-horses, cattle and barges. About this time the burgesses had a long quarrel with those of Shrewsbury as to their right of buying undressed cloth and raw hides in Shrewsbury, the Shrewsbury burgesses being anxious to restrict the privilege to themselves.

The Borough is mentioned in 1222 as ruled by two bailiffs, or provosts. The next year the bailiffs of Bristol were ordered by Henry III. to allow the burgesses of Brug all the privileges granted them by the charter of his father. In 1226, the king, having just left Bridgnorth for Kidderminster, granted the town a fair on the eve, the day, and the morrow of St. Luke's Day (October 18th). This grant was to hold till the king came of age, which he did the following year, when he gave a new charter, recognizing many privileges of the town, and granting them a Gild Merchant, with the clause that if any man born a serf should come to live and hold land in the borough, and be a member of the Gild, and pay *lott* and *scott* with the burgesses for a year and a day without being claimed by his lord, he should be free in the borough. The burgesses were to be free of tolls throughout the king's dominions, and to hold the royal mill of Pendleston on the Worf for ever at a rent of £10 yearly. In 1231 the burgesses received payment for the carriage of forty casks of wine for the king to Castle Matilda in North Wales, and for unloading the rest of the King's wine and storing it at Brug. In 1256 the borough had two charters from the king, giving the burgesses further privileges in managing their own affairs, probably as a reward for their loyalty to the king in the struggle with Simon de Montfort. In 1321 the castle was taken and held by the barons against Edward II., but soon after was retaken by the king, who five years later took refuge there from his enemies.

The trade of Bridgnorth seems to have flourished throughout mediæval times, but in the reign of Elizabeth a change in fashion appears to have affected it, and in 1571 an Act of Parliament was passed to enforce the wearing of woollen caps, because by the going out of use of such headgear was brought about the "decay, ruin and desolation of divers antient Cities and Boroughs which had been the nourishers and bringers-up in that faculty of great numbers of people, as London, also Exeter, Bristowe, Monmouth, Hereford, Rosse and Bridgnorth."

During the years of peace of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Market and Town Hall stood before the north gate outside the walls, but when the Civil War broke out in 1642, it was pulled down lest it should interfere with the defences of the town, and its successor, the present Town Hall, was finished during the Commonwealth.

In addition to the fair on St. Luke's Day, the town had the grant from Edward III. of a four days' fair on the feast of the Translation of St. Leonard and the three days following (November 6th).

Leland describes the walls of Bridgnorth as being all in ruins, and in his account says:—"The Towne stood by Cloathing, and that now decayed, the Towne sore decayed therewith." Camden only mentions its history as a fortress. In 1764 it is called a "large and populous town," and a "place of great trade, both by land and water"; while in 1720 the town is said to be "as famous for making stockings as any in the kingdom," and to be well supplied with "all sorts of artificers, and is very famous for gun-making." Its position on the Severn brought it much trade in the days when all heavy carriage was conveyed by water, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century a considerable amount of boat-building was carried on there.

OSWESTRY.—The town of Oswestry, if not actually of Norman foundation, owes its status as a borough to the Norman castle built soon after the Conquest. It is a little uncertain when Oswestry was founded. Tradition gives it a Welsh origin, but probably it does not go back to a date earlier than the king whose name it bears, who was killed in battle in 642. Domesday does not mention the place by name, but tells us that the large manor of Maesbury (Meresberie) was held by Rainald the Sheriff, and that it had a church and a priest, and a castle work (*Castellum Luure*), and was head of the Hundred of Mersete. We gather from the record that on the spot hallowed in the popular mind by the death of St. Oswald, Warin, the Norman Sheriff of Shropshire, had founded a stronghold and a town, where Welshmen were dwelling peaceably with their Saxon and Norman neighbours under the shadow of the church of St. Oswald and the control of the Norman castle. Warin the sheriff was dead in 1086, but before his death he gave to the Abbey of Shrewsbury the church of St. Oswald and the tithes of that town (*villae*). The castle was built by Warin's successor, Rainald, and in 1086 the manor was valued annually at the then large sum of 40s., though in the time of King Edward the Confessor it had been waste. The position of Oswestry on the Welsh border brought a chequered existence to the town, for in the reign of Henry I. it was for some time held by the Princes of Powis, one of whom in 1148 built, or rather rebuilt, the castle.

In 1160 William FitzAlan died lord of Oswestry, or Blanchminster, as it was often styled in the twelfth century, when apparently its stately church was new, and stood a white stone building backed by the timber houses of the town. Much money was spent on the castle during the latter half of the twelfth century, and its upkeep was a heavy charge on its lords, the FitzAlans. In 1175, the ordinary garrison there consisted of a knight, two watchmen, two porters, and twenty men-at-arms. In 1216, when King John, in anger at his barons' defiant attitude, ravaged the west of England, he burnt the town of Oswestry, but apparently could not take the castle. In 1228, mention is made of an annual four days' fair at Oswestry, and probably by that time the town was rebuilt. Some thirty years later John FitzAlan proposed to wall the town, and had a grant of tolls for five years, but the walls seem to have been unfinished in 1283, for King Edward I. in that year gave the bailiffs and burgesses permission to levy special duties for twenty years for the completion and repair of the town walls. In 1294-5 Oswestry was taken by the Welsh prince Madoc, but it did not remain long in his hands, as on June 24th, 1295, King Edward was himself at Oswestry. In 1302, at the death of Richard, Earl of Arundel, the castle was said to be of no value to his estate because of the great expense of its maintenance.

Unlike Ludlow Castle, that of Oswestry seems to have never become anything more than a fortress, nor of greater importance than the borough beside it. The burgesses were mainly of Welsh extraction, and on the cessation of the border wars the town flourished and became an important centre of trade. It was annexed by

Richard II. to the Principality of Chester, but the change seems to have been only nominal.

Leland gives a long account of Oswestry, and tells us that there were no towers on the walls except those at the gates, and that the town was moated, with running water in its ditch. He says the "Towne standith most by Sale of Cloth made in Wales." He also calls Whittington a town, but describes it as a "village in a valley," containing a hundred houses. If this is correct, it was a very large village for Shropshire in the sixteenth century.

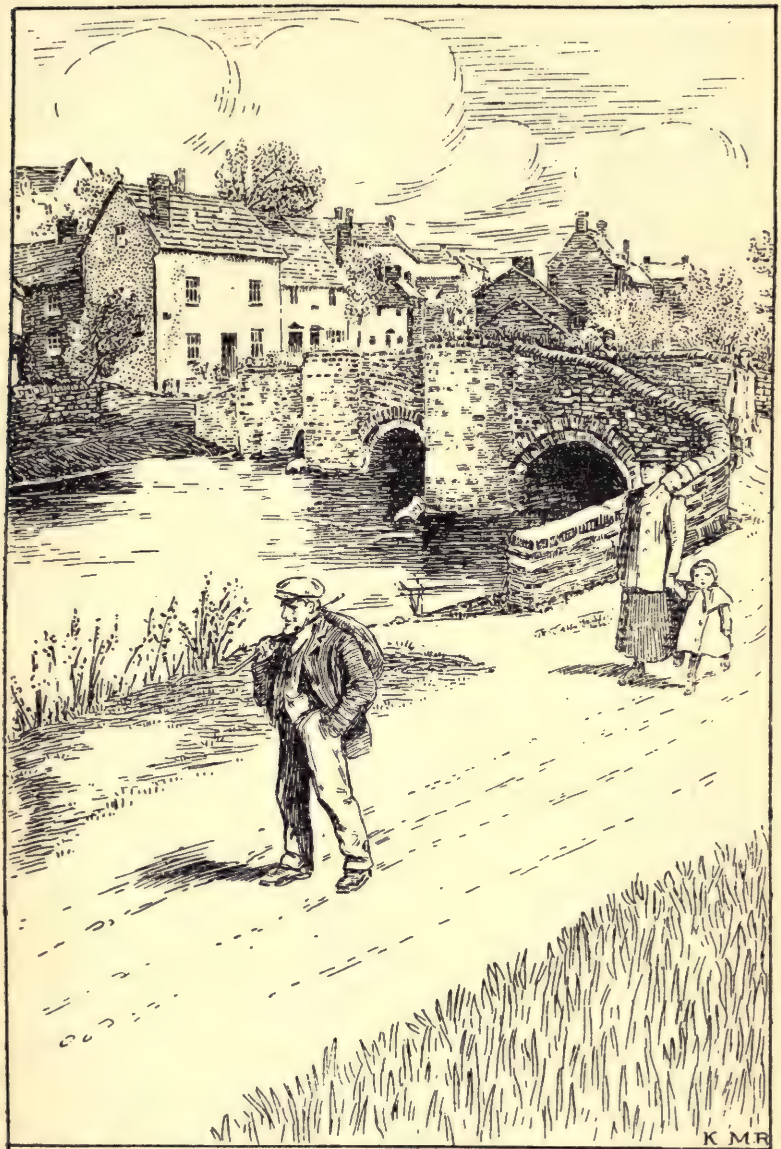
Camden, half a century later, speaks of Oswestry as a little town enclosed with a wall and a ditch, and fortified with a small castle. "'Tis a place of good traffic, for *Welsh Cottons* especially, which are of a very fine, thin, or (if you will) slight texture; of which great quantities are weekly vended here." The old gazetteer of 1764, *England Illustrated*, mentions this trade as being then quite decayed, and the town as poorly built.

Oswestry suffered from disastrous fires in 1542 and 1567. In the latter year two hundred houses are said to have been burnt down, which possibly accounts for this lack of stately buildings. The opening of the coach route from London to Holyhead brought renewed importance to Oswestry, and in 1810 it is described as a "flourishing little town," in whose market many webs of cloth made in Denbighshire were sold, which after being dyed were used "to supply clothing for the slaves in the West Indies and South America."

CLUN.—The Barons of Oswestry were also lords of another border town, namely, Clun. The manor of Clun was important and valuable in Saxon times, and under King Edward the Confessor it was annually worth £25 to its lord, Edric Sylvaticus. During the troubled years following the Norman Conquest, Edric's estates suffered severely, and the yearly value of Clun fell to £4. The manor was conferred by William the Conqueror on the Norman Picot de Say, who enfeoffed three of his knights there, but kept the greater part of the land in his own hands. The Domesday record tells us that there was arable land sufficient for sixty teams, but in 1086 only twelve teams were being employed. There were several Welshmen among the tenants at that time, four of whom together paid a rent of 2s. 4d. There is no mention of either church or priest, though there is little doubt that the district had a church in Saxon times. Possibly the dedication to the warrior saint, St. George, tends to prove that Clun Church was founded by a Norman baron. We have the first documentary trace of its existence in a deed of the latter half of the twelfth century, when Isabella de Say, lady of Clun, gave the church and its chapels to Wenlock Priory. The chapels then mentioned are: St. Thomas of Clun, St. Swithin of Clunbury, St. Mary of Clunton, St. Mary of Hopton, St. Mary of Waterdene, and the chapels of Edgton and Sibdon.

The castle of Clun seems to have been built within the earthworks of an earlier stronghold. In 1160 it was among the possessions of William FitzAlan (I.), who had married Isabella, the heiress of the De Says, and from that time onwards it is frequently mentioned. In 1195 it is said to have been stormed and burnt by the Welsh. Isabella's son, William FitzAlan (II.), in 1204 received the grant from King John of a three days' fair at Clun on St. Martin's Day (November 11th) and the two days following. During the thirteenth century Clun cannot have had very peaceful surroundings, but the town was important as a centre for markets and fairs. In 1272, during the long minority of Richard FitzAlan, a valuation was taken at Clun Castle of the manor. The three commissioners and twelve jurors reported that:—

> Clun Castle was small, but pretty well built. The roof of the tower wanted covering with lead, and the bridge needed repairing. Outside the Castle was a Bailey, enclosed with a fosse, and a certain Gate in the



OLD BRIDGE AT CLUN:

Castle wall thereabouts, had been begun (but not finished). The buildings in the said Bailey, viz., a grange, a stable, and a bakehouse were in a weak state. In the town of Clun were 188 burgesses, and 22 burgesses had tenements in the assarts[1] of the manor. Clun Market, held on Saturdays, produced £10 *per annum*.[2] Two fairs of three days each were held at Martinmas (Nov. 11) and at the feast of SS. Pancras, Nereus, and Achilles (May 12). They realised £6 *per annum*.

There were pleas of the Free Court mentioned, and pleas and perquisites of the Portmote (*i.e.*, the borough court):—

Robert the Clerk paid the rent for his Smithy in 24 horse shoes or 12^d, and certain of the Burgesses were bound to provide 20 men, each to accompany the lord of Clun four days yearly on his hunting excursions.

In 1302 the castle was said to be worth no more than the cost of its maintenance. In the town of Clun there were eighty-five burgesses who paid a rent to the lord. There were two water-mills at Clun, one of which had been in existence apparently in 1086, as Domesday alludes to a mill there "serving the court" (*serviens Curiae*), but we can only guess what is meant by the court. In 1326, Edmund, Earl of Arundel, confirmed to his burgesses of Clun all the privileges they had enjoyed under his ancestors, and pardoned them for having sworn fealty to Roger de Mortimer when he had visited Clun Castle. We find no mention of any wish to wall the town of Clun, though the borough had its independent life outside the fortifications of the castle.

Leland makes no mention of a town here, but speaks of the castle as having been both strong and well-built, but somewhat ruinous in his day. Clun is not on the list of the market towns given in 1764, though it must have then been a centre of population. There was at one time a considerable amount of weaving done here, and the site of the fulling mills for cloth is still remembered. It finally ceased to be a borough in 1886.

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[1] Assarts are clearings in the forest.

[2] Equivalent to about £300 a year in modern currency.

RUYTON.—The Earls of Arundel had another borough in Shropshire in Ruyton-XI.-Towns, where in 1311 Edmund, Earl of Arundel, had a grant from Edward II. of a market on Wednesdays, and a yearly fair on the eve, the day, and three days after the Nativity of St. John the Baptist (June 24th).

The Earl had a little before this time obtained from the Canons of Haughmond seven burgages they had built in the "new vill of Rutone," on land given to them by one of the le Strange family. He seems to have rebuilt the small castle at Ruyton, which is said to have been destroyed by the Welsh in 1202, and to have planned the borough as an appanage of his castle. He gave the burgesses freedom from tolls throughout his lands; leave to use the laws of Breteuil, and to form a Gild merchant, and the right of freedom for anyone who had held land and paid scot and lot with the burgesses for a year and a day. The borough seems never to have greatly flourished, and though its charter was confirmed in 1429, its trade seems to have been absorbed by the more important towns of Oswestry and Shrewsbury. In 1640 a mace was presented by Richard Kinaston, which, with the copy of the charter now forms almost the only trace of its dignity as a borough.

CHURCH STRETTON.—In the fourteenth century the Earls of Arundel became lords of yet another town in Shropshire—Church Stretton. This had been an important manor in Saxon times, when it belonged to Edwin, Earl of Mercia. It suffered during the Norman Conquest, and its annual value fell from £13 to £5. In 1086, the manor of 8 hides had a considerable population with a priest, a church, and a mill. The Domesday record makes no mention of a castle though the earthwork on the Castle Hill at All Stretton, and probably some fortification on the hill where Brockhurst Castle afterwards stood, defended the Dale in very early times. In the twelfth century Stretton was in the hands of the king, and possessed a Royal Castle under the care of a Castellan.

In 1214 King John ordered the Sheriff of Shropshire to advertise a weekly market at Stretton and a yearly fair on the feast day of the Assumption (August 10th). The men of "Strettondale" frequently accounted to the King themselves for the dues of the Manor. The Castle of Stretton was repaired in 1238, but in less than twenty years later it had apparently been dismantled, as the Provost and Jurors of the Manor then reported that there was no castle, and that the Sheriff of Shropshire had ordered four men to let dry the king's fishponds, and had sold the fish. In a valuation of Stretton made in 1309, there is no mention of any town dues, and the modern status of Church Stretton seems to have grown out of its convenient situation as a market for the surrounding country. The manor, after being held under the king by a variety of overlords, was given in 1336 by Edward III. to Richard, Earl of Arundel, and remained in that family till the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

In the time of James I., Bonham Norton, Sheriff of Shropshire in 1611, was one of the chief men in Church Stretton, though his earlier life was connected with London, where he was King's Printer to Charles I. In 1614-5, he obtained from the king the confirmation of a grant made in 1337 by Edward III. to the Earl of Arundel of a weekly market on Thursdays, and a yearly fair on the eve, the day, and the morrow of Holy Cross Day (September 14th). Bonham Norton also built a half-timbered market house for the town, which unhappily was taken down in 1839, greatly to the detriment of the picturesqueness of the place.

Leland calls Church Stretton a "Townlett," the same word that he uses for Pontesbury and for Hodnet. Camden calls it a little town, and in 1764 it is ranked among the market towns, and said to have a good corn market.

WHITCHURCH.—Whitchurch, like Oswestry and Ludlow, appears in the Domesday Book under a different name from the one by which we now know it. It was then called Weston, and was held under Earl Roger by William de Warren, a kinsman of the Conqueror. It had been among the possessions of King Harold, but seems to have passed to the Norman Earl with little or no struggle, as it suffered no loss of value in the change, but from £8 annually in Saxon times it had risen to £10 under the Norman rule. There was a fairly numerous population on the 7½ hides of the manor, but nothing that goes to show the existence of a town. There is no mention of a fortress, but the manor was probably held by King Harold and by William de Warren as being important to the defence of the border. A younger branch of the Warrens held the manor in the twelfth century, and in 1199 the Sheriff of Shropshire paid ten merks to the lord of Whitchurch for the "repair and emendation of his Castle of *Album Monasterium*." We see from this that a stately church had been built, and Weston had become known as White Minster. It is not improbable that the great Earl William de Warren and Gunnora his wife, who founded the Priory of Lewes and that of Castle Acre, had provided a church for their Shropshire tenantry. The dedication to St. Alkmund is difficult to account for in this case, but local tradition may have associated Weston with the Saxon Prince, whose death in battle was regarded as a martyrdom.

In 1240 there is mention of the Castle of Album Monasterium, which was held by William, son of William de Warren de Albo Monasterio. Thirteen years later, the Abbot of Combermere accused William de Albo Monasterio and others of stealing his cattle, and the Abbot's men in return were sued by Clemencia, widow of William de Albo Monasterio, for the murder of her husband, the Seneschal of William de Albo Monasterio, and she also accused several of the monks of Combermere of violent conduct ordered by the Abbot. Three men were outlawed for the murder, but the abbot and monks were acquitted.

Some twenty years later the lordship of Whitchurch was held by four heiresses. In the valuation of the estates of the eldest, it was said to be held under the Earl Warren by service of the Lord of Whitchurch doing duty as the Earl's Huntsman "at the will and at the charges of the said Earl."

There is at that time no mention of a grant of market or fair, but in 1284 the lords of Whitchurch had a Free Court twice yearly, a Gallows, a Market, Fair and Warren there. These privileges were called in question eight years later, when a charter from Richard I. was shown granting the Wednesday's market, and the question of the annual fair was dropped.

One of the heiresses of Whitchurch married Robert le Strange as her first husband, and her son, Fulk le Strange, succeeded to her share of the manor, and bought out the other co-parceners. In 1324 he was lord of the whole manor, and held it "by service of taking the venison throughout Earl Warren's lands in England, at the charges of the said Earl." The manor is mentioned as possessing four mills, of which the mill of Whitchurch was to pay six merks rent to Richard de Leylonde for his life. In 1362 a fair was granted at Whitchurch to be held on the eve, the feast, and the morrow of St. Simon and St. Jude (October 28th). The sister of the last Lord Strange of Blackmere married Sir Richard Talbot, father of the great Earl of Shrewsbury, who was killed at Chatillon, and whose bones rest in the Church of Whitchurch. The Talbots sold their manor of Blackmere in the latter part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Leland says that "the Toune of Whitchurch in Shropshire hath a veri good market," and he notes twice over that Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, was buried at Whitchurch. Camden also mentions the fact, and gives his epitaph. In 1764 it is described as a "pleasant large and populous town, with a handsome church," and in 1824 the principal trade was said to be the "making shoes for the Manchester market, and malting."

SHIFNAL.—The chief Shropshire property of the Talbot family lay on the east side of the county, near Shifnal and Albrighton. Shifnal, or rather Idsall, as it was generally called in the Middle Ages, was a manor of the Saxon Earls of Mercia, and brought Earl Morcar £15 a year. It passed to the Norman Earl Roger, but during the troubles of the Conquest its value fell to 6s. In 1086 it had recovered its original value in the hands of Robert FitzTetbald, who held the manor under Earl Roger. On the 7½ hides there were 36 teams, and a population of 26 serfs, 37 villeins, 3 bordars and 3 radmans, which, if we calculate as each representing a household of five, makes a number of nearly 350, in addition to which there would possibly be servants of Robert Fitz-Tetbald on his demesne land. The collegiate Saxon Church of Idsall was probably ruined in the troubles, and not yet restored in 1086, as Domesday makes no mention of either church or priest. The manor wood was sufficient for fattening three hundred swine, but the manor mill is not mentioned. The De Dunstanvills were lords of Shifnal in the twelfth century, and the first Walter de Dunstanvill about 1175 gave the Mill of Idsall to Wombridge Priory, saving the right of free grinding for his own house, and for others who had a similar right. The third Walter de Dunstanvill in 1244 had a grant of a market and fair at Idsall. This right to a fair and market was called in question some fifty years later, and in 1315 a second charter was given, allowing a market on Mondays and Fridays, and two fairs, one on the eve, the day, and the morrow of the feast of the Holy Trinity, and the other on the eve, the day, and the morrow of Michaelmas. In 1470 this grant of a market and two fairs was renewed to

John, Earl of Shrewsbury. The Earls of Shrewsbury remained lords of the manor till 1606.

Leland makes no mention of a town of Shifnal, but says that the Earls had here a "Manor Place of Tymber and a Parke," where George, Earl of Shrewsbury, was born, and where James Talbot died from wounds received in the battle of Northampton.

The Lay Subsidy Roll of 1327 shows a large population in Shifnal and its hamlets. Four of the inhabitants are called "le Tournour," and probably represent the makers of wooden cups and platters, an important industry in the days when metal was costly and fine pottery rare.

In 1592, Shifnal, like Newport and Oswestry, suffered from a fire, which nearly destroyed the town, and did great damage to the church.

The heyday of the prosperity of Shifnal was during the coaching days, when it was the junction on the Holyhead road for Madeley, Bridgnorth, Newport, and their neighbourhood. When the railway came this was changed. Its markets failed, with Wolverhampton on one side and Wellington on the other, and its trade followed to a great extent.

ALBRIGHTON.—The later Earls of Shrewsbury had an interest also in the borough of Albrighton, near Wolverhampton, which has now ceased to carry the status of a town. This was a small manor, before the Conquest held by two Saxons, which was waste when it came to Norman Venator, who held it under Earl Roger. In 1086 it was valued at 16s. annually. Norman Venator's heirs seem to have been the family of De Pitchford, who held Albrighton till 1303, when Ralph de Pitchford sold the manor to Sir John Tregoz, of Ewyas Harold, in Herefordshire. Ralph de Pitchford claimed the right of holding a market and fair by a charter of Henry III. to his grandfather. In 1313, John de la Warre, the heir by marriage of John Tregoz, claimed a market on Tuesdays, and a four days' fair, but the king's charter in answer to his claim limited the fair to three days: the eve, the day, and the morrow of the Translation of St. Thomas the Martyr (July 7th). At the close of the fifteenth century Albrighton was in the hands of the Talbots. In 1663 the manor was confirmed to them, and Lady Mary Talbot gave a mace to the borough, which received a royal charter from Charles II.

Albrighton Fair seems to have been of note, for the Chelmarsh register has the entry:

> **July 7th, 1597. S^r William Wood, Clerke, Vicar of Chelmarsh, buried, being Abryton Fayre daye.**

Leland speaks of Albrighton Park, where Sir John Talbot had a house on the way from Shrewsbury to London, "toward Hampton Village," at Pepperhill.

In 1824 there were four fairs held, at which a good deal of business was said to be done. The Market House was still in existence at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is described by the Rev. J. B. Blakeway[1] as standing in the centre of the town, and having two arches, with an upper room in which the business of the Corporation was usually transacted, and under the arches below was the town prison, called the "Crib," and a pair of stocks. The Court of the Manor, and other public assemblies were held in the "Toll Shop," which stood in the centre of the street facing the market house. It was a spacious building with a belfry at one end. In the large room under the Toll Shop the body of the Duchess of Shrewsbury lay in state in 1726. The tolls of the fairs in the latter part of the eighteenth century were given to a Mr. John Broomhall to pay for the education at his school of six boys belonging to the borough.

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[1] "History of Albrighton." *Shropshire Archæological Society's Transactions*, 2nd series, vol. xi., p. 34.

NEWPORT.—Newport, also on the Staffordshire border, is a borough of royal foundation, dating from the reign of King Henry I., who founded it on his great manor of Edgmond as a centre for trade. It had its Franchises and Customs in his reign, and possessed a priest and a church, confirmed before 1148 as a possession of the Abbey of Shrewsbury. Henry II., about 1165, gave a Charter to Newborough (Novo Burgo), confirming the liberties they had enjoyed under his grandfather. The name of Newborough is always used till the beginning of the thirteenth century, Newport first appearing in 1221, and then for some years both names are used indifferently, though Novus Burgus is the favourite form.

The Burgesses of Newborough held their town by the service of conveying to the King's Court, wherever it might be, the fish taken in the great fishpond (Vivary) of the town, and the Keeper of the King's Vivary was one of the most important men in the place. In 1227 King Henry III. granted the manor of Edgmond and the town of Newport to Henry de Audley and his heirs, and the custom of taking the fish was continued as a service due to the Audleys. About 1250, James, son of Henry de Audley, on the payment of £5 by the burgesses, allowed that the obligation of the burgesses should only be to take the fish within the boundaries of Shropshire. In 1282 there is mention of a market at Newport, and of the Vivary and Mill. Five years later Edward I. confirmed the charter of Henry II., and the claim of the burgesses to have a Merchant Gild seems to have been allowed.

In 1317 Nicholas de Audley (II.) is mentioned as having received 60s. for the tolls of the market and fairs, but the fair days are not given.

Edward II., in January, 1321-2, granted a charter to Newport: "for the love I bear to Robert Levere, burgess of the said borough and our host there," and a manuscript record says that in the fifteenth year of his reign the king "lay at the Antelope in Newport, one Robert Levere, a merry host, being master of the inn, who so pleased his majestie in his entertainment, that for the sake of this jolly landlord, the town had their charter renewed from Salop."

Newport, like other Shropshire towns, suffered severely from fire, and in May, 1665, the greater part of the town was burnt down, including 160 houses and the Market House, built in 1632 by William Barnefield "to sell butter and cheese in."

Leland places Newport among the market towns of Shropshire, and says that within a mile of the town was a "goodly Mere or Poole." In 1764 there is no mention of the pool, but the town is said to be "a good town, with a free grammar school, and also a free school for the poor children of the town." Newport, like Clun, ceased to be a borough in 1886.

CLEOBURY MORTIMER.—Mediæval barons were fully awake to the desirability of encouraging trade as it was then understood. Following the example of the king, they gave privileges to such gilds as might exist in the towns with which they were connected, and they encouraged the formation of trading centres on their estates. The great family of Mortimer possessed in Shropshire the town of Cleobury, which took its distinguishing name from them. The Domesday Book speaks of it as a large and important manor with a considerable population, including a priest. The land was tilled by twenty-four teams, the full number required, and there was a mill, and a wood capable of fattening five hundred swine. The manor belonged before the Conquest to Edith, the Queen of Edward the Confessor, and though she was dispossessed in favour of a Norman, William FitzOsborn, who in turn made way before 1086 to Ralph de Mortimer, the manor had increased in annual value from £8 to £12. There is nothing in this record that implies the existence of a town, nor of the castle, which was garrisoned against Henry II. about 1154, and was taken and destroyed by that king, but rebuilt some years later. Cleobury received the grant of a yearly fair in 1226. The days first fixed were the eve, the day, and the morrow of Holy Cross Day (September 14th), but for some reason these were changed to the eve, day, and morrow of the beheading of St. John the Baptist (August 29th), but in 1227 the first date was reverted to. The Mortimers made Cleobury the head of their Shropshire estates, and in 1266 Roger de Mortimer constituted his twenty Shropshire manors members of a Franchise of Cleobury, responsible to himself and not to the king. The place where he held his courts is marked by the remains of an ancient cross.[1] The third Roger de Mortimer became, in right of his wife, lord of Ludlow Castle, and obtained a grant of a fair at Ludlow on St. Katherine's Day (November 25th) and four days after, but he seems to have done little or nothing to aggrandise Cleobury.

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1581) mention is made of the borough and the burgesses of Cleobury, when it was enacted that each new burgess should pay a fine of 2s. to the lord of the manor (then Robert Dudley), and the new burgesses should give the other burgesses a dinner. From Sir Robert Dudley the manor passed in 1608 to the Lacon family. Ten years later Sir Francis Lacon obtained the grant of a Wednesday market in Cleobury Borough and three fairs a year. Leland speaks, however, of Cleobury as "Mortimer's Clebyri in Shropshire, a Village and a Parke," and mentions that it had once possessed a castle, but says "there be no Market Townes in Cle Hills." Camden speaks of the castle as having been demolished by Henry II., and only small traces left. In 1764 Cleobury is given as a market town, with the remark: "it has now nothing worthy of note;"

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[1] Mrs. Baldwyn-Childe, "Cleobury Mortimer." *Shropshire Archæological Society's Transactions*, 1st series, vol. ii., p. 42.

but *England Displayed*, in 1769, says it is remarkable for a Wednesday market, and two fairs on May 2nd and October 27th, for "black cattle, sheep and pigs."

WEM.—Wem was in 1086 the head of the Barony of William Pantulf, of whom we read in the pages of Ordericus Vitalis, the Chronicler. It was a manor of four hides, and had been held in Saxon times as four manors, but was waste when it came into William's hands. The value had been 27s. yearly in the reign of King Edward, and in 1086 it had more than recovered its former prosperity, as it was worth 40s. There is nothing to suggest a town in the Domesday record. There were only two teams on land estimated to employ eight, and the existence of a hawk's-aerie and a wood capable of fattening a hundred swine, with an enclosed portion (a *Haye*) for game shows wild surroundings. William Pantulf took the King's side during the rebellion of Earl Robert de Belesme, and was made governor of Stafford Castle. He was succeeded in his English estates by Robert, the second of his four sons.

The Pantulfs continued lords of Wem till 1233, but the manor of Wem was only one among many that they possessed in Shropshire, Staffordshire, and elsewhere. The heiress of the Pantulfs married Ralph le Botyler. In 1281, on the death of Ralph, the manor of Wem possessed a fortalice, two gardens and two parks, two watermills, and one windmill. The tenants in villeinage were bound to execute all castle works at the will of their lord. One item of revenue was the toll paid by traders and travellers who passed through the manor, and included *potura satellitum*—apparently drink for the baron's men. Ralph's widow, Matilda Pantulf, married a second husband, Walter de Hopton, and in 1286 he had at Wem, by charter of Henry III., a market and a fair.[1] Four years later Wem Castle was reported as in ruins, the market to be held on Sundays (which was changed to Thursdays later), and the fair on the eve, the day, and the morrow of St. Peter and St. Paul (June 29th). From the Botylers the manor passed by heiresses to the Barons Greystock, the Lords Dacre, and the Earls of Arundel. Thomas, Earl of Arundel in 1636, obtained a charter for a fair on St. Mark's Day (April 25th) at his borough of Wem, to last one day. The town is first called a borough in the sixteenth century, when it was governed by two bailiffs. Leland makes no mention of it in his *Itinerary*, and apparently went from Shrewsbury to Whitchurch by Prees. In speaking of his ride from Haughmond to Moreton Corbet, where he saw "a fair Castel of Mr. Corbetts," and so to Prees, he crossed, apparently at Lee Bridge, "Roden Riveret, rising not far above Wem village, a mile from that place." Camden also speaks of Wem as on the Roden, with the "site of an intended castle." The *Gazetteer* of 1764 mentions the Grammar School, founded in 1645, as the most noteworthy feature of the place. In 1677 a great part of the town was burnt down; 140 houses, the church, and the market house were ruined, but the school buildings escaped.

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[1] One authority says by gift of King John, 1205.

ELLESMERE.—Ellesmere was originally a manor of the Saxon Earls of Mercia, and after the Conquest was held in demesne by Earl Roger de Montgomery. It was valued annually at £10 in Saxon times, but yielded £20 to Earl Roger, a very large increase in value. In 1086 it had a large population for that time, including two priests. After the rebellion of Robert de Belesme, Earl of Shrewsbury, Ellesmere passed into the hands of King Henry I., who granted the manor to William Peverel of Dover, but it was again in the king's hands in 1177, when Henry II. gave the land of Ellesmere to his half-sister Emma, wife of David ap Owen, Prince of North Wales. In 1203 mention is made of repairs to Ellesmere Castle, then held by King John, who two years later gave it to Llewellyn ap Jorwerth, Prince of North Wales, in marriage with his daughter Joan, who, under the title of Lady of Wales, granted it to be a free borough with all the free customs belonging to the law of Breteuil.[1] In 1221 Llewellyn received a grant from Henry III. of a weekly market at Ellesmere on Tuesdays till the king should be of age.

In the latter half of the thirteenth century Ellesmere Castle was in the care of the Sheriff of Shropshire. In 1242 money was spent on the castle works, and again, fifteen years later, when the "King's House in Ellesmere Castle" was also repaired, possibly with the view of a visit from Prince Edward. In the next year Peter de Montfort was in charge of Ellesmere, and was empowered to levy customs for five years for the expense of walling the town. When Edward I. was firmly seated on his throne, he gave the manor for life to Roger le Strange of Knockin, whose brother Hamo had held it under the king in the latter part of the reign of Henry III.

In 1280, a careful survey was made of the manor. There is a mention of the Borough Court, and rents of tenants in burgage. The tenants of Horton paid 2s. rent, and were bound to victual the men-at-arms in the castle, and William Smith, of Birch, held half a virgate there (apparently about 40 acres) by the service of doing the shoeing and ironwork of teams and mills in the manor, and, in war-time, of abiding in the castle and forging all necessary implements. Roger le Strange died in 1311, and the king took possession of Ellesmere, but in 1330 Edward III. granted it again to the Stranges, with whom it remained till inherited from the Barons of Knockin by the Stanleys, Earls of Derby. The Kynaston family were of note in early days in the neighbourhood of Ellesmere, and in 1598 Sir Edward Kynaston, Knight, had a licence from Queen Elizabeth to hold a market on Tuesdays and a fair at Ellesmere. Leland, who visited the town some sixty years earlier, says of it:—

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[1] The law of Breteuil seems to have been that of a town of mixed population.

> From Ellesmere, wher was a Castelle, and very faire Polis yet be. Ellesmere hath a 4 Streates of meately good Building, privileged with ij Faires, but no cummun Market now.

Camden mentions the manor, but gives no hint of a town there, and it is not on the list of market towns of Salop in 1764, though in 1810 it was said to have a good market, the principal articles of which were apples, flax, and stockings.

WELLINGTON.—Wellington was also in Saxon times an important manor of the Earls of Mercia, and yielded them £20 a year. After the Conquest it was kept by Roger de Montgomery in his own hands, and was valued at £18 yearly. It was of great size—fourteen hides, with five hamlets, and land sufficient for twenty-four teams, a valuable mill, and two fisheries. The population was not large for the great acreage, but included a priest.

Wellington, like Ellesmere, became a Royal manor after the rebellion of Robert de Belesme, and its revenues were accounted for to the king by the sheriff of Shropshire. As the years went on, the manor was shorn of some of its outlying portions, but it was still of large extent when King John gave it to William de Erdington. In 1244 Giles de Erdington had a grant of a fair and a market at Wellington. Some forty years later this grant was renewed to Sir Hugh Burnell, then lord of the manor, the day for the market being Thursday, and two fairs being allowed, one on the eve, the day, and the morrow of St. Barnabas (June 11th), and the other on the eve, the day, and the morrow of the beheading of St. John Baptist (August 29th). At the close of the twelfth century Arleston, one of its hamlets, had been nearly twice as large as Wellington itself,[1] but during the thirteenth century Wellington seems to have increased. There is no mention of a town here in mediæval times, and the importance of the manor consisted to a great extent in its woodland.

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[1] Arleston had twenty-four hearths and Wellington fourteen.

Leland places Wellington among the market towns of the county, and describes it as "toward London way" from Shrewsbury. The *Gazetteer* of 1764 speaks of it as a market town, but containing nothing of note, though there are drawings extant of a fine half-timbered market house of seventeenth century date. In 1824 it is described as lying in the centre of iron and coal works, with a well-supplied and much-frequented market, but no mention is made of the nail making which was at one time carried on there.

Wombridge was an early centre of coal mining of which Leland says: "Coles be diggid hard by Ombridge, where the Priory was," but in his day iron was smelted with wood fuel, and he says: "yerne is made in certen places of Shropshire, and especially yn the Woodes betwixt Belvoys and Wenloke." In speaking of the Clee Hills he mentions: "There be some Blo Shoppes to make yren upon the Bankes of Milbroke," but the iron foundries of the Shropshire black country date from long after his time.

The coal of their manor was a source of income to the Austin Canons of Wombridge before the Dissolution of the Priory in 1535, but it was not used for iron smelting till many years after their day. Tong Forge was celebrated for its iron in the early seventeenth century, and the "Iron Mills" in Condover parish were at work in 1608, smelting iron with wood fuel.

WENLOCK.—The borough of Wenlock grew up under the shadow of the Cluniac priory there, and its burgesses were the prior's men, just as those of the Abbey Foregate at Shrewsbury were the men of the Abbot, having a distinct corporate life from that of Shrewsbury itself.

The Domesday mention of the great manor of St. Milburg's Abbey, then recently re-founded by Earl Roger de Montgomery, makes no mention of any town at Wenlock, and the growth of the borough seems to have been gradual. In the thirteenth century, in 1248, Henry III. granted to the Prior of Wenlock a confirmation of a fair held on the eve, the day, and the morrow of St. John the Baptist (June 24th), and in 1224 he had ordered that the market formerly held at Wenlock on Sundays should be held in the future on Mondays. In 1227 the Prior gave the King twenty merks to have the three charters of King Richard confirmed to him, and to have a grant of one fair and two markets. This fair was the one on St. John Baptist's Day confirmed twenty years later, and the markets were the one on Mondays at Wenlock, and one at Eaton-under-Heywood on Thursdays. Henry III. visited Wenlock several times, and wine for his use was sent there from Brug (Bridgnorth). Under Edward I. the Prior's right to the fair and markets was called in question, and also his right to hold a market and a fair at Ditton Priors. The Prior proved his claim to the former, but said nothing about Ditton.[1]

In 1247 the burgesses of Wenlock complained of the arbitrary treatment of Prior Imbert, and an enquiry was made. The burgesses then apparently consisted of eight freemen, who held by old enfeoffment, paying varying rents to the Prior, and thirty-nine burgesses who paid each 1s. *per annum*, for their burgages. Some of these had tenants of their own, who were not responsible to the Prior, but on whose goods the Prior had laid a claim. He had also exacted a toll on beer, over and above the ordinary custom. In 1379 there is mention of the weekly market and yearly fair, and of the profits of six water-mills at Wenlock.

In 1467 Sir John Wenlock, Knight, lord of Wenlock, who was killed at the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471, obtained from King Edward IV. the grant that Wenlock should be a free borough, incorporated with a bailiff and burgesses, and that its liberties should extend throughout the parish of the Holy Trinity of Wenlock. This was confirmed in 1546-7 by Henry VIII., and again by Charles I. in 1631. The Priory of Wenlock, in 1395, ceased to be dependent on its parent abbey of La Charité sur Loire, but its prosperity seems to have then begun to decline, and Sir John Wenlock was apparently as important a man in Wenlock as the Prior, Roger Wenlock, himself.

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[1] There are fairs at Ditton Priors held four times a year at the present time.

Leland notes that Wenlock was a market town "where was an Abbey." He must have been there within a very few years of the Dissolution, but makes no further note than that it had been a house of Black Monks.

Camden speaks of Wenlock as famous for limestone, and in the time of King Richard II. for a copper mine. The *Gazetteer* of 1764 says it was famous for limestone and tobacco-pipe clay, possibly confusing it with Broseley, which lies within its liberties. In 1769 the weekly market was said to be on Mondays, and the four fairs on May 12th, July 5th, October 17th, and December 4th.

MARKET DRAYTON.—Market Drayton also owned an ecclesiastical overlordship. In 1086 it was a manor of two hides held by William Pantulf, already mentioned in connection with Wem. It had only a small population of two neat-herds, two bordars, and a priest, and there were only two teams on land sufficient for eight. The value in Saxon times had been 20s. annually, but had fallen to 10s. William Pantulf gave Drayton to the Abbey he had founded at Noron as a cell of the great Norman Abbey of St. Evroul. The English estates of St. Evroul were managed by the Prior of Ware in Hertfordshire, another daughter house of the Norman Abbey, but not long after the foundation about 1133, of the Cistercian Abbey of Combermere, just over the Shropshire border, Drayton was leased to the monks there, and they retained property here till the Dissolution. Under their care the place throve and became a town. In 1245 Simon, Abbot of Combermere, received the grant of a market on Tuesdays, and a fair on the eve, the day, and the morrow of the Nativity of the Virgin (September 8th), in his manor of Drayton,[1] and other privileges of a borough.

In the time of Leland, Drayton was a market town, but he says nothing more than that it was upon Tern River, and Camden says the same in mentioning the battle of Blore Heath. In 1764 it was only distinguished for its market, but in 1810 the canal wharf at Stone, in Staffordshire, had drawn much of its trade away, and a small manufactory of haircloth for furniture was its chief business.

BISHOP'S CASTLE.—The town of Bishop's Castle was also of ecclesiastical origin, and grew up under the protection of the fortress built in the early twelfth century by the Bishop of Hereford for the defence of his great manor of Lydbury North. It was at first known as Lydbury Castle, but in the thirteenth century apparently the growth of population round it caused it to be distinguished from the parent village of Lydbury, and called Bishop's Castle, or in its immediate neighbourhood, simply "the Castle." The episcopal estate covered more than 18,000 acres, and was reckoned in 1086 as 53 hides, of which 32½ were waste. In the time of King Edward the Confessor the great manor was valued at £35 annually; later its value fell to £10, and in 1086 was still only £12. Possibly the damage done to their manor during the troubles of the

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[1] Edward II. granted to his favourite, Bartholomew de Badlesmere, a Thursday market at Adderley and a three days' fair there at St. Peter's Day.

Conquest awoke the bishops to the necessity of building a castle on its border. In 1223 the castle was ordered to be in readiness to be held against the king's enemies, and three years later the king was himself at Lydbury on his way from Leominster to Shrewsbury. In 1249 the Bishop had the grant of an annual fair and weekly market in his manor of Lydbury North, and in 1292 it is mentioned that these were held at Bishop's Castle on Fridays, and on the eve, the day, and the morrow of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist (August 29th). In 1263, during the Barons' War, Bishop's Castle was stormed by John FitzAlan, Lord of Arundel, who held it for sixteen weeks, and did great damage to its surroundings, for which the Bishops received no recompense. In 1290 Bishop Swinfield spent four days at his castle here, but as a general rule the fortress was left to the care of a constable. Among the duties of the burgesses mentioned in 1291 was the providing of a man three times a year, if the bishop wished, to drive the deer for hunting. In 1360 John At Wood was constable of the castle, and was called upon to find forty men out of Bishop's Castle for the wars in France. He received a salary of £10 a year, and a robe such as esquires of a lord wore, or 20s. in lieu of it; a payment of 6d. a day for the keep of two horses; 2d. a day to keep a porter; and 4d. for every brewing of ale made to be sold there. In 1394, a grant of Richard II. gave the borough a market on Wednesdays, and a fair on November 2nd[1] and the two following days. Queen Elizabeth, in 1572, gave the town a charter of incorporation, and its liberties were confirmed by James I. in 1609.

Leland calls the town "Bishopes Town, wher is Wekely a very good market," and in another place he speaks of the "very celebrate Market" there. Camden also speaks of the town as "well-frequented"; and in 1764, the market is said to be "famous for cattle and other commodities, and much frequented by the Welsh." The charter of Bishop's Castle was renewed in modern days, and the town is one of the six corporate boroughs of the county.

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[1] November 3rd is St. Hubert's Day, the patron saint of hunting, and is also the day of St. Winifred.

MODERN CENTRES.—In addition to these boroughs and the old market towns, Shropshire possesses several centres of population that date from modern times. Broseley and Coalport have been called into existence by earthenware and china made from the fine local clay, and have been prosperous places since the close of the eighteenth century. Iron and coal have brought inhabitants to Madeley, Coalbrookdale, Ironbridge, Dawley, Oakengates, and their surroundings. Shropshire was the first county in which iron rails were made.[1] They were used in 1767 by the Coalbrookdale Company, and soon superseded the wooden rails which had till that time been in use. The iron bridge that has given its name to what was originally a hamlet of Madeley was built in 1779.

The most recent of the Shropshire market towns is Craven Arms, where in the parishes of Halford and Stokesay the railway junction has brought a considerable population, and the name of a coaching inn has become that of a considerable centre of business, with a Friday market and several important cattle fairs.

Madeley, which now has a larger population than the borough of Wenlock, was from Saxon times among the possessions of the monks of Wenlock, and was frequently known as Madeley Priors. In 1269 the Prior had licence from Henry III. to hold a weekly market on Tuesdays, and a yearly fair on the eve, the day, and the morrow of St. Matthew (September 21st), in his manor of Madeley. Coalbrookdale was in the parish of Madeley, as were Ironbridge and Coalport, all places to which prosperity came in the eighteenth century. Broseley was an ancient parish within the Liberties of Wenlock, and its church was a chapelry of Wenlock Church. In 1379 the Prior of Wenlock was lord of a third of the manor, and had the right to each third presentation to the church. The manufacture of Broseley clay pipes goes back to the seventeenth century, soon after the introduction of tobacco. There was a manufacture of pottery in this neighbourhood in Roman times, but the clays seem to have been little used, if at all, during the Middle Ages.

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[1] Dukes' *Antiquities of Shropshire*, p. 83.

Dawley was originally a member of Roger de Montgomery's great manor of Wellington, and in the Middle Ages was only a small village, with a fortified manor-house built in 1316, and a church belonging to the mother church of Shifnal. Camden mentions Dawley Castle as having been annexed by Richard II. to the Principality of Chester, and he goes on to remark: "Not far from the foot of this hill, in the depth of the valley, by the Roman military highway, is Okenyate, a small village of some note for the pit-coal." The difficulty of carriage kept the coal pits from being of great importance, except those within easy distance of the Severn, but at the beginning of the nineteenth century the formation of canals brought increased prosperity to the Shropshire Black Country, to which the construction of railways some years later added.

Madeley had possessed a market house in the seventeenth century, which the *Beauties of England*, of 1811, says had been destroyed "somewhat more than a century ago," but replaced in 1763 by a new house some two miles from the site of the first, where the market was kept near the foot of the "famous iron bridge." In 1810 Madeley had some five thousand inhabitants, and "a work for obtaining fossil tar or petroleum, from the condensed smoke of pit coal," which had been started some twenty years before by the Earl of Dundonald.

ANCIENT MARKETS.—In addition to the places which have grown up into towns, Shropshire has several villages that have had the right of fairs or markets since at least the thirteenth century. Bishop Burnell, in 1269, had the grant from Henry III. of a market on Tuesdays at Acton Burnell, and two yearly fairs on the eve, the day, and the morrow of the Annunciation (March 25th) and of Michaelmas (September 29th). He planned that Acton Burnell should become a town under the protection of his manor-house, but this was never carried out. His nephew, Philip Burnell, some twenty-five years later, had charters for fairs and markets on his estates at Rushbury, Wootton (near Stanton Lacy), and Longden, but little advantage seems to have been taken of the privilege.

Under Henry III. Chirbury ranked as a royal borough, but it was always overshadowed by Montgomery, its near neighbour. Burford also was a free borough by a grant of Henry III. to Hugh de Mortimer. The burgesses held by the law of Breteuil and paid to Hugh and his heirs one shilling for each burgage.

Henry III. granted fairs or markets to several others of the chief Shropshire landowners. Philip Marmion had a Monday market at Pulverbach, and a fair on the eve, the day, and the morrow of St. Edith (September 16th), and though the market has long ceased, the fair remains. Thomas Corbet had a Wednesday market at Worthen, and two three days' fairs at St. Peter's Day (June 29th) and Holy Cross Day (September 14th). He had also a Friday market at Shelve, and a three days' fair there at the Invention of the Cross (May 3rd). His father Robert, as early as 1200, had the grant of a Wednesday market at Caus, and Thomas, nearly fifty years later, had a three days' fair at the Translation of St. Thomas the Martyr (July 7th). Henry de Pembruge, lord of Tong, had a weekly market on Thursdays, and a three days' fair at the feast of St. Bartholomew (August 24th). The lords of Wattlesburgh had a licence in 1272 for a Wednesday market there, and a three days' fair at St. James' Day (July 25th). The lord of Hodnet—always an important manor—had the right of holding a market by charter of Henry III., but had no fair. The Abbot of Haughmond also had a grant later, from Edward II., of a Thursday market at Leebotwood, but no fair. The barons of Castle Holgate had a grant of a market from Henry III., and of market and fair from Edward I. The fair was to be on the eve, day, and morrow of the feast of Holy Trinity. Fulk FitzWarin, lord of Alberbury, had a charter from the latter king for a Friday market and two fairs, each of three days, one at the feast of St. Cyriac and St. Julitta (July 16th), and the other at Michaelmas. The lord of Burford had a Saturday market and a three days' fair at Lady Day; the lord of Cheswardine a Monday market and a three days' fair at St. Swithin (July 15th); of High Ercall a Monday market and a three days' fair at the Nativity of the Virgin (September 8th); of Chetwynd a Tuesday market and a three days' fair (granted in 1318) at All Souls' Day (November 2nd).

Possibly the proximity to Newport and its inns made this latter more attractive than it would otherwise have been. Stottesdon had a three days' fair at the Assumption and a Tuesday market, and Aston Botterel a Tuesday market and a fair at Michaelmas. Knockin had also a Tuesday market and a fair at St. John Baptist's Day.

Among the privileges of Battlefield College was a fair on St. Mary Magdalene's Day (July 22nd), which was an important event in the neighbourhood. Provision was made for it by building booths, and the "cryer of the fair" was a man of importance for the time being.

In addition to these markets and fairs which are known by documentary evidence to have once existed, there are several traditional sites in various parts of the county where markets are said to have been held in times of plague.[1] One of these is Croeswylan, near Oswestry, where the tradition may be founded on a memory of a terrible plague year in Oswestry in 1559. A similar tradition is associated with Benthall Stone, which stands at some cross roads on the way from Shrewsbury to Alberbury, about 3 miles from the latter village; and also with the Butter Cross at Alveley, a wayside cross of mediæval date, which stands at cross lanes, not very far from the ferry over the Severn at Hampton Lode. Benthall Cross (as it is often called) may possibly have been the scene of one of the fairs granted to Alberbury, as it stands on what was once the way down to the ferry that put the FitzAlan Castle of Shrawardine in touch with the country about Pontesbury and Westbury. Both Benthall and the Butter Cross are too far from a town to make the legend of a plague market very probable, but may they not possibly both mark the site of some unchartered fair, only kept up clandestinely in the days when a charter became a necessity?

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[1] Gough's *History of Middle*, p. 177.

Cressage, though not apparently having any charter of market, had a market cross, which Mr. Blakeway, the historian of Shrewsbury, who died in 1826, mentions as standing within his memory. It was apparently a covered building, and was removed as having become a centre of unruly behaviour in the village.

It is now difficult always to see the reason why some of the centres for markets and fairs became towns, while others made no use of their opportunities for trade. One fact is noticeable which may throw a little light on the evolution of the Shropshire towns, and that is that every ancient town except Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Wenlock, and Church Stretton, is on the borders of the county. Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth are on the only natural waterway, and Stretton on the natural highway between the north and south divisions of the county. There is a trace of a line of demarcation crossing Shropshire shown by customs and folklore, and to some extent by dialect, but this is of too remote a date to affect the life of the towns. It is impossible within the limits of this chapter to enter into the details of the individual life of each borough, with the internal jealousies of the High and Low Town of Bridgnorth, or of Frankwell and Shrewsbury, or the rivalry of the two parts of Ludlow in their Shrove Tuesday rope-pulling, but enough has been written to show the variety of history and of interest that is bound up in the beginnings of the market towns of Salop.

HENRIETTA M. AUDEN.

RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS—MEDIÆVAL AND POST-MEDIÆVAL

By the Editor

(1) THE SOURCES OF SHROPSHIRE CHRISTIANITY

IN endeavouring to trace some of the chief religious movements which have influenced the people of Salop at different periods, and left their mark on it as a county, it is necessary to go back to an early period of its history. The first question that suggests itself is—whence did this part of England derive its Christianity? We know that there was a British Church which had its full ecclesiastical organisation in the fourth century; and as one of its representatives at the Council of Arles, in 314, was Bishop of Caerleon, in Monmouthshire, south of this county, and as there was a large Celtic Monastery or College at a later period at Bangor Iscoed, just over the Shropshire border northwards, there is a strong probability that the country which lay between contained at least some adherents to the Christian faith. Possibly when the ruins of Uriconium are completely explored, traces of Christian worship will be found there, as has been the case of Silchester. Whether, however, Christianity prevailed in what is now Shropshire under the

Roman rule, or not, it was swept away by the Saxon invasion, and its remnants driven westward into the mountain fastnesses of Wales. The worship of Woden took the place of the worship of Christ, and the work of conversion had to be begun over again. This work was undertaken from two different points of the compass. The old British Church was too paralysed by its misfortunes, and smarted too much from the wounds which the Saxons had inflicted, to take any real part in their conversion, but the work was vigorously undertaken by Celtic missionaries from the north, whose head-quarters were at Iona, and afterwards at Lindisfarne, and by Latin missionaries from the south, who derived their credentials from Rome.

The two streams of influence met in the west midlands, and it was possibly within the boundaries of the county that Augustine held the conference with the representatives of the British Church, at which he gave such dire offence by his arrogant manner. It is almost certain, however, that the county in Saxon times derived its Christianity, not from Augustine's Roman Mission, but from the Celtic missionaries who came from the north.

King Oswald of Northumbria, whose death near Oswestry at the hands of the heathen Penda has been already alluded to, was the great friend and patron of St. Aidan, who came from Iona, and was the first Bishop of Lindisfarne; and among the disciples of St. Aidan was St. Chad, who became the first Bishop of the Mercians, and fixed the seat of the See at Lichfield. But the strongest proof of the statement that Shropshire derived its Christianity from the north is to be found in a study of the saints to whom the churches of the county are dedicated. There is among them a reminiscence indeed of the earlier British Christianity. The old Church of Cressage was dedicated to St. Sampson, who was a Welsh saint, born, according to tradition, in Glamorganshire, and afterwards Bishop of Dol, in Brittany, among his fellow countrymen beyond the sea. There exists a well at Much

Wenlock dedicated to St. Owen,[1] who was also associated with Brittany, and there is considerable probability that St. Juliana, to whom one of the Churches of Shrewsbury is dedicated, represents a British saint, possibly St. Sulien, whose name had a similar sound. The traces, however, of influence from Lindisfarne are much more numerous. Not to mention the prevalence of dedications to St. Andrew, the patron of the northern half of the island, there are numerous churches dedicated to St. Chad at Shrewsbury and elsewhere, and the dedications to St. Alkmund at Shrewsbury and Whitchurch, as well as Derby outside the county, point in the same direction, for Alkmund was a prince of Northumbria. A stronger proof, however, is to be found in the fact that two churches at least in Shropshire—Donnington and Clungunford—are dedicated to St. Cuthbert, the Apostle of Durham, who was one of the successors of Aidan as Bishop of Lindisfarne.

There is yet one dedication which is the most important of all. On the banks of the Severn, about four miles from Shrewsbury, is the pretty church and village of Atcham, memorable as the place at which the chronicler Ordericus Vitalis was baptized. But it has earlier associations than that. Atcham is a shortened form of Attingham, and Attingham is by its etymology the "home of the children of Eata." We have no difficulty in identifying Eata. He was one of the young men trained by St. Aidan for missionary work among the heathen Saxons; and so we have in the village which enshrines his name, and in the church which is dedicated to his honour, an abiding memory of the self-denying efforts by which he and his fellow missionaries from the north restored to Shropshire the light which heathenism had quenched, and restored it to be wholly quenched no more.[2]

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[1] *Cf.* Miss Burne's *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, p. 621.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 620.

(2) MONASTICISM AND THE CRUSADES

We pass to the great movement of monasticism as it affected Shropshire. The idea that it was possible to live a higher religious life in seclusion than amid the occupations of the world was one that developed itself at an early period in Christian history. Its development, however, was not uniform, but varied greatly according to national as well as individual temperament. Its earliest form was the solitary life of the Egyptian hermit; but it was a natural and easy step from this to the cloister, which was intended to combine the devotional life of the individual with the home life of a community. Shropshire, indeed, had its hermits all through the mediæval period. In the red sandstone of Bridgnorth, at no great distance from the town, is a cave which still bears the name of "The Hermitage," and was inhabited by a series of Anchorites, some of whose names are recorded, and of whom the earliest is said to have been a brother of the Saxon king Athelstan. Haughmond Abbey is stated to have been built on the site of a hermit's cell, and, not to mention other traditions, there was in the time of Henry III., on the Wrekin, a "Hermit of Mount Gilbert," whose name was Nicholas de Denton, to whom in 1267 the king made a grant of six quarters of corn to be paid by the Sheriff of Shropshire, "to give the Hermit greater leisure for holy exercises, and to support him during his life so long as he shall be a Heremite on the aforesaid mountain." [1]

We pass, however, to monastic life spent in community. Allusion has already been made to Celtic monasticism as embodied in settlements like that at Bangor Iscoed, on the banks of the Dee, but this was rather a college—one might almost say a university—than a monastery in the sense in which the word is commonly used. Its members were far more numerous, and the object of their association was more for learning than devotion, and included the idea of missionary effort on behalf of others. They appear to have had but little in the way of a conventual rule of life. The development of monasticism proper, by which is meant the living in community under strict religious rule, received its chief impulse in Western Europe from St. Benedict in the first half of the sixth century. His rule, which became the model for such institutions, was moderate in its requirements. It included a care for learning and for devotion, but it attached great importance to manual labour. Its essential idea, however, in St. Benedict's mind, was that of a religious Home.[1] Whatever the employment of the brethren—whether in the Church or in the fields, in the Scriptorium copying manuscripts, or in the Hospitium waiting on guests—they were to regard themselves as members of a household, children of a common home, of which the Abbot was the father and head.

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[1] Eyton's *Antiquities*, vol. ix., p. 49.

The Benedictine rule was apparently introduced into England by St. Augustine of Canterbury, at the close of the sixth century, but it owed much more to St. Dunstan in the middle of the tenth. The most opposite pictures of the character and work of St. Dunstan have been drawn by his friends and his foes, but though he was no doubt stern in his ecclesiastical views, and firm in his carrying of them out, his personal character was without reproach; and he laboured both for Church and country with all his heart at a very difficult crisis. In the State his efforts were mainly directed to the consolidation of Danes and Saxons into one nation; in the Church his desire was to raise the clergy to a higher level, both social and religious. For this purpose he discouraged the secular clergy who shared the common life of their flocks, but were under little or no discipline, and encouraged the regulars who lived under conventual rule; but at the same time he endeavoured to reform the lax ways into which the monasteries had fallen, and give them a higher tone under strict Benedictine rule.

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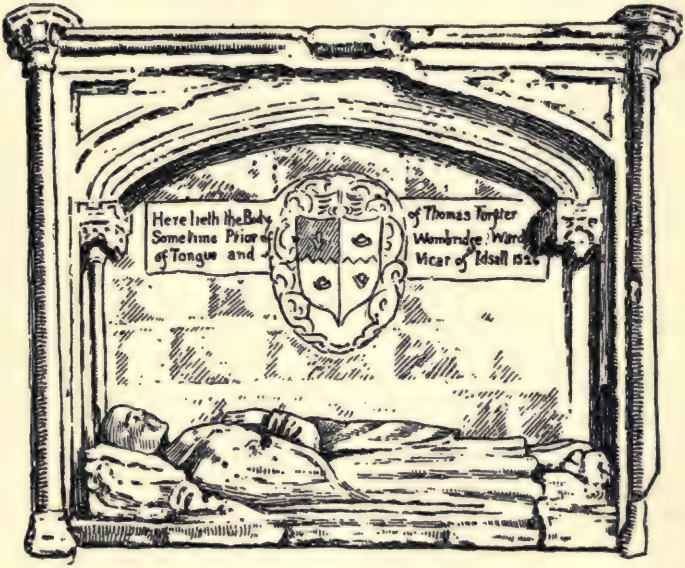
[1] Taunton's *English Black Monks of St. Benedict*, vol. i., p. 32.

The Benedictine Order had one abbey of the first rank in Shropshire, besides two others of less importance. The two smaller houses were Bromfield Priory, near Ludlow, and the Priory of Morville, near Bridgnorth; both had been Collegiate foundations in Saxon times, but Bromfield became a cell of Gloucester Abbey, and Morville was attached to the Abbey of Shrewsbury, just alluded to. Shrewsbury Abbey, indeed, was one of the most important monasteries in England; it owed its foundation to Roger de Montgomery, the great Norman Earl of Shrewsbury, who, acting under the advice of his chaplain, Odelerius, father of the chronicler Ordericus Vitalis, and supported by the influence of his Countess Adeliza, converted the little wooden church of St. Peter, which stood



EFFIGY IN SHIFNAL CHURCH.

just across the Severn, into a stately home for brethren of the Benedictine Order. It is true, indeed, if we read between the lines of Ordericus' narrative, that not only the credit of the idea of founding the Abbey was due to Odelerius, but that the larger part of the endowment also came from him; but it was his patron's support which gave success to the movement, and Roger crowned the work by himself becoming a brother, and breathing his last within its walls.

The moderate endowment of its foundation was soon augmented by other benefactors, until it stood in the first rank of religious houses, and its mitred abbot took his place as a baron of the kingdom. In the reign of Stephen the monks increased the veneration in which the abbey was held, as well as its revenues, by adding to the relics it already possessed the body of St. Winefride, which was brought out of Wales with much ceremony and deposited in the Church of the monastery in a shrine of which a fragment still remains. The wealth of the abbey is shown by the fact that when it was dissolved by Henry VIII. the annual revenue amounted to about £600—a large sum according to the value of money in those days. At the Dissolution, in spite of petitions from the Corporation that the buildings might be preserved for use either as a place for entertaining illustrious visitors, or as a college, the dissolved abbey passed into the hands of lay favourites of the court, and the buildings were dismantled and ruined. The portions now remaining are the nave of the Church (which was saved by the fact that it served the parish as well as the monastery) and the reader's pulpit of the Refectory, with a few other fragments. The nave is partly Norman, with later additions; the reader's pulpit probably dates from the early part of the fourteenth century.[1]

We pass from the Benedictine Order to its earliest offshoot, that of Cluny. This had its origin in a desire to bring monasteries into closer relationship to one another by making them dependent on one common head. Odo, Abbot of Cluny in the century before the Conquest, conceived the idea of a confederation of houses over which the Abbot of Cluny should preside, and to whom all the other abbots of the Order should render account. The idea caught the mind of those in high places, and under the fostering care of the Norman kings some thirty Cluniac houses were founded in England.

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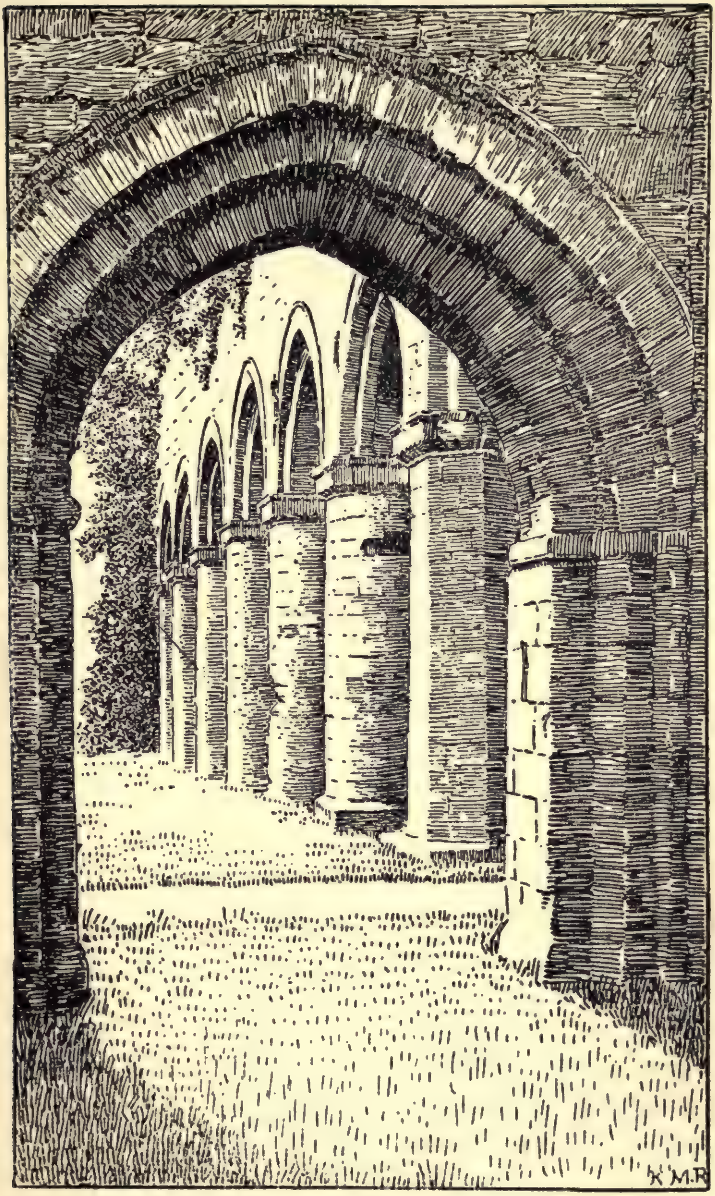
[1] For further details, *cf.* the author's *Shrewsbury* (Methuen), pp. 71-78.

As regards the daily life of the monks, the Cluniac reform was in the direction of what we should now call "Ritualism." They not only professed a more strict observance of the Benedictine rule than had become prevalent, but their services were marked by a splendour and magnificence such as had not hitherto been attempted.

Shropshire possessed one house of the Cluniac Order—that of Wenlock. Being dependent on another house, it was always a priory, and not strictly speaking an abbey, but it became a very wealthy and important establishment.

Wenlock, however, had a monastic history before it became Cluniac. St. Milburga, granddaughter of Penda, the pagan king of Mercia, founded and presided over a nunnery there in the seventh century, which is said to have been destroyed in one of the Danish raids. This was restored in collegiate form by Leofric, Earl of Mercia, and husband of the Lady Godiva, some half-century before the Conquest. It again, however, fell into decay until it passed into the possession of Roger de Montgomery, who refounded it as a Cluniac house. He seems to have endowed his new foundation with most of the lands which had belonged to Leofric's college, but he made it monastic in the later sense of the word. In the words of Domesday, "Earl Roger hath made the Church of St. Milburga an abbey," and the same document also shows that his foundation of Wenlock was anterior to that of Shrewsbury. In the first instance it did not depend on Cluny direct, but



BUILDWAS ABBEY.

on the Priory of La Charité on the Loire, which was itself affiliated to Cluny.

Wenlock soon took a high position among monastic establishments; and, as was the case with Shrewsbury and St. Winefride, its monks added both to the veneration and wealth of their house by discovering the remains of St. Milburga and translating them with much ceremony to their new church. The result of all this was that by the end of the thirteenth century it was a richer foundation even than the Abbey of Shrewsbury.

The fact that it was an alien priory caused it to pass through troublous times during the period that England was engaged in war with France, but it was saved from confiscation by being made denizen—that is, constituted an English house—in 1395, and it survived till the Dissolution by Henry VIII., at which period its annual revenue was £434. It had a small dependent cell at Preen.

The portions of Wenlock still remaining bear witness to the desire of the Cluniac Order for magnificence and grandeur in their ritual. The dimensions of the great church may be traced without difficulty, and the chapter house is a beautiful specimen of Transitional Norman. The well head in the middle of the cloister garth will also arrest attention; while the Prior's Lodging, though a late addition to the monastic buildings, presents the unique spectacle of an ecclesiastical house of the fifteenth century which has come down to modern times almost untouched, and is still inhabited.

The Cluniac endeavour to reform the Benedictine rule had been followed, as was inevitable, by another in the opposite direction. If the Cluniacs were the Ritualists of Monasticism, the Cistercians were its Puritans; and it shows the tendency of English thought, even in mediæval times, that the number of Cistercian monasteries founded in England was more than three times as many as of those belonging to the Cluniac Order.

The Cistercians were represented in Shropshire by two houses—that of Buildwas for monks, and that of Whiteladies, near Brewood, for nuns. The Order had been founded in 1098 by Robert, Abbot of Citeaux, in Burgundy, with the idea of a return to stricter discipline, and among the first monasteries founded on the model of Citeaux was that of Savigny, in Normandy.

Buildwas was founded about 1135 by Roger de Clinton, Bishop of Chester, and in the first instance was affiliated not to Citeaux, but to Savigny. In 1147, however, Savigny was united to the Cistercian Order, and carried with it the houses dependent on it. Buildwas received numerous benefactions and privileges in its earlier days, but it never attained to the wealth of its neighbours at Shrewsbury and Wenlock.

The Order was noted for its hospitality, and the monks probably found that their income did not much more than suffice for their wants. The result was that Giraldus Cambrensis[1]—whose estimate was derived from the monasteries of the Welsh border—tells us that the Cistercians were well known for their greed. This view is confirmed in the case of Buildwas by a story told by Matthew Paris. He relates a conversation which took place in 1256 between Henry III. and the then Abbot.

"How is it," said the King, "that you have denied me pecuniary assistance, though I am in need, and, moreover, ask you as a suppliant? Am I not your patron?"

"I would," replied the Abbot, "that you were not only our patron, but our father and defender; but it is not fitting that you should cause us loss by extorting money from us; you should rather ask the benefit of our devout prayers, like the good king of the French."

"I want both your money and your prayers," His Majesty answered.

But the Abbot made reply: "I do not see how that can possibly be; you must go without one or the other, for if you violently extort from us our substance, how can we offer for you prayers that are devout and heartfelt? And prayer without such devoutness is of little or no avail."

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[1] *Giraldus Cambrensis' Works* (Rolls edition), vol. iv., p. 120.

The chronicler, however, goes on to say that the conversation had not much effect on the King. He proceeded quietly (*tacitus*) to insist on help from all the abbots of the Order.[1]

There was one direction, however, in which the Cistercians, equally with the other monastic orders, gave without stint, and that was for their buildings. They prided themselves on the simplicity of their services, as contrasted wth the gorgeous ritual of the Cluniacs, but none the less the architecture of their houses must be the very best that the age could produce; and so the remains of the Cistercian houses which have come down to us are among the architectural gems of England.

The remains of Buildwas are no exception. They are principally the church and the chapter house, which are both comparatively perfect, and exhibit all the simple and massive beauty which belonged to the Norman period as it began to pass into that of the Early English.

The Cistercian nunnery known as Whiteladies, on the Staffordshire confines, so called to distinguish it from the Benedictine House of Black Nuns just over the border, is of uncertain foundation, but probably dates from the end of the twelfth century. It never attained to any great wealth or influence. The present remains consist of part of the church, and are chiefly of late Norman work, agreeing with the date of its foundation.[2]

Neither the Cluniac, however, nor the Cistercian, nor even the great Benedictine Order itself, took such firm hold on Shropshire as did that of the Augustinian or Austin Canons. These had not less than five houses in the county, of which two were large and important. They were situated at Haughmond, Lilleshall, Wombridge, Chirbury, and Ratlinghope.

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[1] Matthew Paris, *Opera* (edition 1644), p. 622.

[2] Whiteladies is within a mile of Boscobel, where Charles II. was hidden in the oak after the battle of Worcester.

The Augustinian Canons were not monks in the same sense as the brothers of the Orders already mentioned. As is implied in the word canon they were all ordained clergy, whereas in the other Orders many were lay brethren. They also differed in another essential particular: they were allowed to take cure of souls. This was possibly in part the secret of their influence and hold on the people. They had interests outside the walls of their monastery which prevented them from being wholly absorbed in the thought of their own salvation, and in ministering to others they were themselves ministered to. They derived their name from St. Augustine of Hippo, in whose writings they professed to find their rule, and as time went on they became more and more assimilated in discipline and manner of life to the monks, though their distinctive features were not wholly lost.

Of the Augustinian houses in Shropshire the two most important were Haughmond and Lilleshall. Haughmond is only about three miles from Shrewsbury, and lies at the foot of the hill bearing the same name. It was founded between the years 1130 and 1138 by William Fitzalan, who was a strong supporter of the Empress Matilda against the claims of Stephen. It received endowments not only from Fitzalan, but also from Matilda and her son Henry II., and among later privileges conferred on it was a permission to improve the adjoining land, granted by Edward I. when staying at Acton Burnell in 1283.

There has come down to us an interesting reminiscence of the life of a canon of Haughmond in the shape of a collection of poems by one of them. John Audelay, or Awdlay, was a brother who was living there in the first half of the fifteenth century. He tells us that he was then blind and deaf, and that his earlier life had not been all it should have been. He found amusement for his lonely hours in composing poems of a religious character:—

As I lay sick in my languor
In an Abbey here by West,
This book I made with great dolour
When I might not sleep nor rest.[1]

And having thus described the manner of composing his work, he ends the preface as follows:—

O look ye, sirs, I ask and pray,
Since this I made with good intent,
Revering God Omnipotent,
Pray for me, ye that be present;
My name is John the blind Awdlay.

Though he repudiates all credit to himself, his poems contain many wise remarks as well as much devotional fervour. They throw light also on the later monastic age by allusions to the unpopularity of spiritual earnestness, and the need of reformation, though at the same time they give expression to the monkish detestation of the oncoming wave of reform as embodied in Wycliffe. Nothing more is known of his personal life, but we may well echo the prayer with which one of his poems concludes, and trust that the blind and deaf old man found the "light at evening time" which he desired:—

Make me worthy, Father dear,
That Thy sweet calling I may hear,
In the hour of my parting;
"Come unto Me, chosen and blest,
And have the bliss that aye shall last
For worlds without ending."[2]

At the Dissolution, when its income was £294, Haughmond passed into the hands of the Barker family, who occupied it as a dwelling house. They introduced various changes and additions, which have marred the original design and increased the difficulty of tracing it. The church has almost entirely perished, though the position of the high altar may be made out by two remaining graves of the Fitzalan family. The fine arches of late Norman work, which led to the chapter house, still survive, and a part of the domestic buildings, the principal being the hall of the infirmary, with a fine gable, containing a large window of Decorated architecture.

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[1] The spelling is modernised.

[2] *Cf. Poems by John Audelay* (Percy Society); also Abbey's *Religious Thought in Old English Verse*, p. 93.

Lilleshall Abbey had a history of a different kind. Haughmond was the foundation of a layman, and was associated with a distinct political cause.[1] Lilleshall was the foundation of a prominent ecclesiastic, and was endowed at the expense of the parochial clergy. It was not originally Augustinian in the strict sense of the term, but belonged to an offshoot of that Order, known as Arroasian, from their first house being near Arras. They were introduced into England about 1140, their earliest settlement being at Dorchester in Oxfordshire. Shortly afterwards some of them came into Shropshire under the patronage of Philip de Belmeis, who was Lord of Tong. This Philip was nephew of Richard de Belmeis, Bishop of London, and was brother of another Richard, who, like his uncle, was an ecclesiastic. While only a boy, this second Richard had been appointed by his uncle to the post of Archdeacon of London, and in 1127, though barely of age, he obtained from Henry I. the grant of a valuable prebend in the church of St. Alkmund, Shrewsbury. One of the estates belonging to this prebend was the manor of Lilleshall, and in 1144, or thereabouts, he transferred the Arroasian canons, whom his brother Philip had brought from Dorchester, from their home at Lizard Grange to Donnington Wood, which was within his own prebendal estate. In the year following he obtained permission from Stephen to endow them with all the prebends of St. Alkmund as they fell vacant, and this large accession of income was followed by another migration to the Wood of Lilleshall, and by the building on their new site of a stately abbey.

It will be seen that the foundation of Lilleshall was an example of a system which proved one of the greatest blots on Monasticism, and went far eventually to alienate the minds of men from it, and bring about its ruin. It was the diverting of an endowment from parochial to monastic purposes, and as might be expected, there was no love lost between the authorities of the town of Shrewsbury, which had been despoiled, and the authorities of the abbey, which had been the gainer by the spoliation. The abbot had a house in the town, which was traditionally the fine half-timbered house which still stands in the Butcher Row near St Alkmund's Church, but neither the abbot nor his stately residence could have been any object of admiration to the one poorly-endowed vicar, who was left to do the work at St. Alkmund's, instead of the college of twelve prebendaries it had previously possessed.

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[1] *Shropshire Archæological Society's Translations*, 1st series, vol. xi., p. 111.

Lilleshall, like Haughmond, had its poet, whose works have survived till the present day. About the time that John Audelay was whiling away his hours of blindness at the one house in the first half of the fifteenth century, John Mirk, or Myrk, was also writing verses at the other. Nothing is known of his personal career beyond the fact that he was a canon—possibly prior—of Lilleshall, but two works of his have come down to us. One is a collection of sermons in English, and the other is a poem, also in English, containing instructions for parish priests. His instructions throw much light on the manners of the time, but the character he incidentally gives of the clergy is not more favourable than that drawn by other writers of the period. The poem opens as follows:—

God saith Himself, as written we find,
That when the blind leadeth the blind
Into the ditch they fallen boo [both]
For they see not whereby to go.
So priests do now behave by dawe [day]
They are so blind in God's law
That when they should the people rede [instruct]
Into sin they do them lead.[1]

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[1] Edited for Early English Text Society by E. Peacock, 1868. The spelling is modernised.

At the Dissolution, when the Abbey passed into lay hands, the income was £229. The ruins still remaining are considerable. They consist of the church, which appears to have been aisleless, and a large portion of the domestic buildings, from which the plan of the house may be traced without much difficulty. The architecture is for the most part Transitional Norman, going back to the period when the abbey was founded, though there are some details of later date.

Wombridge Priory was founded between the years 1130 and 1135 by William de Hadley and his wife, but it never attained any eminence or prestige. Its canons lost nothing in the way of benefactions for want of asking,[1] but they were overshadowed by the greater abbeys which surrounded them. At the Dissolution, Wombridge passed with Lilleshall to the Leveson family, but the buildings have entirely disappeared.

Chirbury Priory was later in foundation than Wombridge by about half a century. Its founder was Robert de Buthlers, Lord of Montgomery, and its original site was at Snead, just over the border, but as the advowson of Chirbury formed part of the endowment, and the church was probably served from the priory, it was moved to that site. In the reign of Edward I. permission was granted to remove back to Snead, but the idea was not carried out.

There is an interesting light thrown on monastic life by the account of a visit paid to Chirbury in October, 1285, by Richard de Swinfield, Bishop of Hereford, who was diligent in the visitation of his diocese, and the record of whose work in that direction has come down to us. In a letter written to the Prior after his visit, he blamed the brethren for being so vain and litigious, so given to gossip and wandering about, that they neither obeyed God nor kept the rules of their Order,

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[1] Eyton's *Antiquities of Shropshire*, vol. vii., p. 365.

LILLESHALL·ABBEY :

and he charged him to reduce them to better discipline at all costs. It is satisfactory to know that the bishop's admonitions had their effect. Some two years afterwards he visited the priory again, and was able to change his tone. There had been a satisfactory reformation, and instead of blaming them, he was able to praise their devotion to God and their kindness to their fellow men.[1] At the Dissolution the income of the Priory was less than £100. The buildings have disappeared.

The last of the Augustinian houses was the little Priory of Ratlinghope at the foot of the Stiperstones, which was a cell of the great Abbey of Wigmore, just over the Herefordshire border. It is interesting as the subject of a document by Llewelyn the Great, Prince of Wales, in which he enjoins his adherents to safeguard and protect it as a house devoted to pious uses.[2] At the Dissolution its revenues barely reached £5.

Old Shropshire, as distinguished from the present county, may claim also one house belonging to the Premonstratensian Order. The parish of Halesowen, best known, perhaps, as containing the home of the poet Shenstone, known as "The Leasowes," belonged in whole or in part to Salop till the middle of the last century, though surrounded by Worcestershire, and twenty miles or so away from the main body of the county. In this parish an abbey was founded in 1215 by Peter de Rupibus, Bishop of Winchester, to whom King John had granted the manor. The Order to which it belonged derived its name from Pré montré—Latinized into Præmonstratum—near to Laon, in France, and was founded by St. Norbert, whose object was to raise the tone of the Augustinian Canons by stricter discipline and more earnest exercises of devotion. Halesowen Abbey became one of considerable wealth and importance, its income at the Dissolution amounting to £337 a year. Some fragments of the conventual church and refectory remain, which from their style must have formed part of the work of the founder.

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[1] *Household Expenses of Bp. Swinfield* (Camden Soc.), p. cxciv.

[2] Eyton's *Antiquities*, vol. vi., p. 160.

Of the purely alien priories, that is, priories which owned allegiance only to monastic houses beyond the sea, and had no superior in England, Shropshire had one. This was the Priory of Alberbury, locally known as the White Abbey. It was a cell of Grandmont in Limousin, in the south-west of France. Its inmates were monks properly so called, not canons, and so far as the Order of Grandmont was to be regarded as a distinct Order, it was, like the Cluniacs and Cistercians, a reformed offshoot of the Benedictines; but it never came near them in importance or influence.

Alberbury was probably founded between 1220 and 1230 by one of the Fitzwarin family, but as an alien priory its revenues were confiscated during the wars with France. It was in royal hands as early as the reign of Edward III., and in 1441, at the request of Archbishop Chicheley, its possessions were granted to his new College of All Souls, Oxford, to which they still belong. The remains of the priory now form part of a farmhouse.

It only remains to speak of the Military Orders, and of the Crusades in which they originated. As regards the Crusades themselves, considered as a religious movement, it is probable that Shropshire was much less affected than other counties which were in closer touch with the continent; but their influence was nevertheless considerable.

There is no record that the western shires contributed any large number to the motley crew which formed the vanguard of the first Crusade under Peter the Hermit and Walter the Pennyless, but when, a little later, men like Robert Curthose, son of the Conqueror, assumed the Cross, there is little doubt that he would have Salopians among his followers, especially as Robert de Belesme, Earl of Shrewsbury, was among the friends and supporters of that prince.

In the second Crusade the effect of the movement was more apparent. It is beyond doubt that it was joined by men of position in the county, for William Peverel, Lord of Sutton Maddock, was among those who died in Palestine in the course of it. This Crusade also numbered among its victims one who was still better known, who has been already mentioned in another connection. This was Roger de Clinton, Bishop of Chester, who had already founded Buildwas Abbey. He joined the Crusade in 1147, and died at Antioch the following year.

The most interesting glimpse, however, of the relation of the Crusades to the common life of the times in this part of England, is given us by Giraldus Cambrensis in his account of the preaching of a Crusade, in which he himself took part. It was in the spring of 1188 that Archbishop Baldwin, who had succeeded to the See of Canterbury three years before, determined to pay a visit to Wales to kindle if possible among the Welsh that enthusiasm for the Cross which burned in his own breast.[1] He chose as his companion Giraldus—whose real name was Gerald de Barri—who was at that time Archdeacon of Brecon in the diocese of Menevia, or St. David's. Giraldus was in his element. Lighthearted and, above all, exceedingly well satisfied with himself, he felt all the importance of personally conducting the Archbishop through his own country, and his narrative everywhere shows how he enjoyed his task. The Archbishop and he began their progress at Hereford, and spent a month in South Wales. They then passed somewhat hurriedly through North Wales, and spent Easter at Chester; then, turning south again, they passed through Whitchurch and Oswestry to Shrewsbury, where they took a few days rest, and then through Wenlock, Ludlow, and Leominster back to Hereford. He speaks of successful preaching of the Crusade at various places on the route. At Chester "the Archbishop's discourses induced several to be signed with the cross and join the Crusade." At Oswestry he relates an incident which had taken place there a short time before, which throws considerable light on the manners and thought of the period:—

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[1] He afterwards joined the Crusade himself, and died in Palestine in 1191.

> Bishop Reynerius[1] [of St. Asaph] was preaching a Crusade; several had taken the cross and were urging and entreating one of their comrades, a youth of great bodily strength, to join them. His answer was this: "When I have avenged my master's death with this spear which now I hold in my hand, then and then only will I join you," by "master" meaning Owain, son of Madoc, a great and distinguished chief who had not long ago been done to death by his cousin, Owain de Keveiliauc, under circumstances of the foulest treachery. As he spoke, mastered by his anger and a yearning for revenge, he brandished his spear wildly in the air; it broke off short of its own accord on either side of his fingers and fell to the ground, leaving in his hand nothing, as it were, except a handful of the shaft. Amazed and terrified at this portent, which he interpreted as a most direct call from heaven to him to take the cross, he hesitated no longer, but there and then volunteered for the Crusade.

At Shrewsbury, the Archdeacon cannot help praising himself:—

> Here, too, thanks to the admonitions of the Archbishop, and the gracious sermons of the Archdeacon of Menevia, we persuaded many to follow the cross.[2]

How many of these *cruce signati* actually went abroad it is very difficult to determine. They were allowed under certain circumstances to redeem their personal service by a pecuniary payment. The number, however, who joined the Crusade of 1189 under Richard I. and Philip of France was large, and among those who fell in the capture of Acre, which was its principal incident, is said to have been Roger de Plowden, a Shropshire knight, who had received a special addition to his coat of arms for his conspicuous bravery.

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[1] Bp. Reyner was a benefactor to Oswestry, founding a hospital there in the opening years of the thirteenth century, which he afterwards put in charge of the Knights Hospitallers. *Cf.* Eyton's *Antiquities*, vol. x., p. 346.

[2] *Cf.* "Giraldus Cambrensis in Shropshire," by the Author, in *Shropshire Archæological Society's Transactions*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 37.

In the Crusade of the following century, which was led in the first instance by Louis IX. (St. Louis), Shropshire appears to have taken a more distinguished part. The English leader was Prince Edward, afterwards Edward I., and his military reputation and personal popularity secured him a large following. Among Shropshire knights who joined him, in 1270, were Hamo le Strange, Lord of Stretton, and his brother Robert, of whom the former died during the Crusade, and the latter apparently returned with shattered health. It was not long, however, before Edward himself was recalled home by the death of his father, and so the last of the Crusades, properly so called, came to an end. Shakespeare indeed represents Henry IV., nearly a century and a half later, as proposing to lead an expedition

> To chase the pagans in those holy fields
> Over whose acres walked those blessed feet
> Which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed
> For our advantage on the bitter cross.

But by the time the fifteenth century dawned, the day of the Crusades was gone by for ever, and Henry's intention, even if he really had formed it, speedily came to nought.

The Crusades, however, gave birth to two Orders of military monks—the Knights Hospitallers and the Knights Templars. Of these the Order of the Knights Hospitallers, or Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, was slightly the earlier in foundation, and lasted longest; but both were the outcome of the enthusiasm of the first Crusade. The Hospitallers had their origin in a hospital dedicated to St. John the Baptist, which had been built at Jerusalem as early as the middle of the eleventh century for the use of pilgrims to the Holy Places. After the capture of the city under Godfrey de Bouillon, those in charge of the Hospital were joined by others from the Christian army, and they were soon after enrolled into a religious Order, their special duty being the protection of pilgrims. It was a necessary outcome of the time that the Order became military, and the result was that men of high rank became members, and wealth rapidly flowed into their treasury. Commanderies, as they were called, were established as branches of the Order, first in maritime cities for the benefit of pilgrims, and then elsewhere throughout Europe. After the capture of Jerusalem by Saladin, the Hospitallers moved their headquarters in 1191 to Acre, whence a century later they retired to Cyprus, and thence to Rhodes, and finally to Malta.

The Templars had a shorter term of existence. They took their rise in 1119, when a small body of French knights who had accompanied Godfrey de Bouillon bound themselves to protect the Holy Places, and those who visited them. They were assigned quarters on the site of the Temple, and hence received their name. Their growth as an Order resembled that of the Hospitallers, between whom and themselves there grew up the fiercest jealousy. Their bravery became a pattern to Europe, but their independence of episcopal authority, combined with their wealth and haughtiness, brought on them almost universal detestation,[1] and in the opening years of the fourteenth century they were suppressed, their suppression being marked, especially in France, by circumstances of great barbarity.

Shropshire had two establishments belonging to these military orders, one at Lydley Heys, in the parish of Cardington, near Church Stretton, and the other at Halston, between Oswestry and Ellesmere. The manor of Lydley Heys passed into the possession of the Templars, and became a Preceptory of that Order about the year 1155. At their suppression in 1308 it became the property of the Hospitallers, from whom, however, it soon passed to the Earl of Arundel.

The history of Halston is more obscure. That, too, is said to have belonged to the Templars, but if so it passed to the Hospitallers at an early period, for it was in their possession in 1221. No buildings remain in either instance, but at Halston a trace of its history is to be found in the fact that the little Church remained extra-parochial, and therefore independent of episcopal authority, down to modern times.

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[1] Readers of Scott will remember his character of the Templar, Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, in *Ivanhoe*.

In following this sketch of monastic history, it will be noticed that the largest proportion of religious houses were founded in the most turbulent period of feudalism, especially during the anarchy of Stephen's reign. The fact illustrates the value of the monastic system when it was at its best. Monasteries were the resting-places for travellers when there were few or no inns; they supplied the wants of the poor when workhouses were undreamed of; they multiplied books and kept learning alive before the age of printing; but beyond this, in times of feudal oppression their walls were the refuge of the weak, and of those for whom the temptations of the world had proved too strong. It was well that those who had not strength to fight should have opportunity to pray, and that those whom the world had soiled should have quiet opportunity to repent. Roger de Montgomery, retiring to his foundation at Shrewsbury, was only one instance among many of such a desire, and we must judge it by the light of that age and not our own.

It is a beautiful picture which Tennyson has drawn in his *Idylls of the King*, when he tells how Guinevere came back to a pure life in the nunnery of Almesbury:—

> They took her to themselves; and she
> Dwelt with them, till in time their Abbess died.
> Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life,
> And for the power of ministration in her,
> And likewise for the high rank she had borne,
> Was chosen Abbess; there, an Abbess, lived
> For three brief years, and there, an Abbess, passed
> To where beyond these voices there is peace.[1]

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[1] Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*, "*Guinevere.*"

(3) THE FRIARS AND LOLLARDS

By the time when the twelfth century closed, the best work of the monastic system was done. This indeed would not have been allowed by its members at the time, for monastic houses went on long after that period increasing both in number and outward prosperity, but we who look back over the centuries have no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion stated. The growth of the spiritual life of the monks had not kept pace with the growth of material prosperity. It had become the object of the monasteries to be great landowners—their granges in various parts which required supervision brought laxity of discipline to those to whom the charge was committed, and who were thus removed from supervision themselves—while, within the wall of the monastery, wealth brought its accompaniment of increased luxury.

It was not long before the inevitable reaction set in, and the religious life of the nation was revived by the coming of the Friars. This movement, it will be remembered, owed its origin to two leaders who, differing in race and country, and with different ends in view, arrived about the same time at similar conclusions as to the wants of the age and the methods by which those wants should be met. One was St. Dominic, a Spaniard, born in 1170; the other was an Italian, St. Francis of Assisi, born in 1182. The object with which St. Dominic set out was the conversion of heretics, that of St. Francis was the help of the poor and needy, and the method which suggested itself to both was personal association with those whom they desired to influence, and willingness to share their lot, however humble and however degraded.

The essential idea of the work of the Friars was not, as in the monastic system, the care of the individual soul, but ministration to the wants of others; and in the case of St. Francis in particular, this enthusiasm to follow in the steps of the Divine Master "Who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," reached such a point that, according to tradition, his body caught the enthusiasm of his spirit, so that his hands and feet and side became marked with the *stigmata* of the Master's Passion.

There were points of difference of detail in connection with the work as sketched in the minds respectively of St. Dominic and St. Francis, but when each had founded an Order, the work of both became practically the same, as they mutually influenced one another. The Franciscans rose to a proper appreciation of the value of learning, which St. Francis himself had despised, and the Dominicans adopted the vows of poverty which originated with St. Francis.

Their sphere of work was in direct contrast to that of the monks, being almost entirely confined to the towns. In these there had been gradually growing up a mass of humanity almost outside religious influence. The development of "slum" life had begun, and to the Friars is due the credit of making the earliest effort to cope with it. For a century or more before their coming, the towns had been growing in size and importance, but alongside of the prosperous trade gilds there grew up a population of workers who did not come under their fostering care, whose work was precarious and their wages uncertain; and to these were added the vagabonds who had made the country too hot to hold them, and sought to hide themselves from various penalties among the more crowded population of the town. This refuse of city life naturally found a home in the most insanitary quarters, where wits indeed were sharp, but where filth and loathsome diseases reigned unchecked. This mass of degraded humanity, however, was exactly what appealed to the wide charity of men like St. Francis, and before the middle of the thirteenth century settlements of Friars were to be found in most of the towns.

The Franciscans, or Grey Friars, had houses at Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth; the Dominicans, or Black Friars, at Shrewsbury; the Carmelites at Ludlow; and the Austin Friars (who must not be confused with the Austin Canons) had no less than three settlements in the county, namely, at Shrewsbury, Ludlow, and Woodhouse, near Cleobury Mortimer.

The Carmelites, also known as White Friars, derived their name from Mount Carmel, where a settlement of hermits had been formed in the time of the Crusades, and being driven out of Palestine by the Saracens, became identified with the Friars, and were approved as such by Pope Innocent IV., about 1250.

The origin of the Austin Friars, or Friars Eremites, is somewhat obscure, but the Order seems to have been formed by the union of several smaller bodies, effected by Pope Clement IV. about 1265.

The above-mentioned were the four principal Orders. There were several others of less importance, but as they had no settlements in Shropshire they need not be noticed here.

A study of the sites chosen by the Friars in all the Shropshire settlements goes to throw light on their work. They generally took up their abode in the most uninviting quarters of the town, on the river marsh, or by the town ditch, on ground that was more or less waste. There are only two exceptions to this, and one of them is doubtful. The site of the Dominican house at Shrewsbury, below the present Infirmary, had some pleasant surroundings, but it was near the river, and probably liable to floods. The only real exception is the site of the Austin Friars' settlement at Woodhouse. This is in the country, not in a town, but the choice may perhaps be accounted for by the fact that the Order was formed by the amalgamation of several existing bodies, and that in the latter half of the fifteenth century, which is the date of the only existing record of its belonging to the Austin Friars,[1] the

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[1] *Shropshire Archæological Society's Transactions*, vol. ii., 1st series, p. 52.

Order had not only spread widely, but had lost some of its primitive simplicity.

The Dominicans and Franciscans had both begun their work in England between 1220 and 1225, and it at first was an untold boon to those among whom they laboured. Their preaching and ministration brought hope to the leper and the outcast, and taught the sin-stained the gospel of pardon and peace; while their poverty was the sign of the reality of their sympathy.

But the system had its elements of weakness. The Friars began by living on the alms of the people, they ended in being professional beggars; they began by caring for those who had been outside the care of the parish priest, they ended in deliberately undermining and thwarting his work. The result was that by the close of the fourteenth century the system had become wholly discredited, and the name of friar was regarded as almost synonymous with ignorance, mendacity, and vice. Indeed, by that time the religious life of the country had again fallen to a low ebb. To see this we have only to turn to the pages of two contemporary poets, who were born and died within a few years of each other, and have left us a striking picture of the time. One was William Langland, author of the *Vision of Piers Plowman*, the other was Geoffrey Chaucer. Langland's poem is of special interest to Salopians, inasmuch as he was probably a Salopian himself, born at Cleobury Mortimer about 1332. His long allegorical poem, written in alliterative metre, consists of a series of visions, in which he incidentally describes, in the spirit of true satire, the abuses, civil and religious, which abounded in the second half of the fourteenth century. Many of these were faults of human nature confined to no one period of history, but others were characteristic of the time, and the Friars came repeatedly under his lash. For example, in the opening vision of the "Field Full of Folk," he saw

> Friars of all the four Orders,
> Who preached to the people for personal profit,
> As it seemed to them good, put a gloss on the gospel,
> And explained it at pleasure; they coveted copes.[1]

And later on he introduces a friar as ready to confess and absolve Lady Meed (that is Bribery) for a pecuniary consideration, without any regard to penitence:—

> Tho' falsehood had followed thee for fifty years,
> I soon would assoil thee for a sackful of wheat.

But along with the Friars he introduces another ecclesiastical character whose influence for evil was still worse. This was the Pardoner, who went up and down the country selling pardons or indulgences.

> There preached too a pardoner, a priest as he seemed,
> Who brought forth a bull, with the bishop's seals,
> And said he himself might absolve them all
> Of falsehood in fasting, or vows they had broken.
> The laymen believed him, and liked well his words,
> Came up and came kneeling, to kiss the said bull:
> He blessed them right bravely, and blinded their eyes,
> And won with his roll both their rings and their brooches.

If we turn to Chaucer, who was born within ten years of Langland, and probably died in the identical year of his death, we find the same characters and the same abuses.

Among the pilgrims who assembled at the Tabard Inn in Southwark to take their journey together to the Shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury, as related in his Prologue, were both a friar and a pardoner as well as a monk and a nun. The poet has depicted all in unfading colours, but only a few allusions can be made here.

Chaucer's Friar, like Langland's,

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[1] Quoted from *The Vision of Piers Plowman done into Modern English*, by Professor Skeat.

> Had power of confession
> As said himself, more than a curate,
> For of his order he was licentiate.
> Full sweetly heard he confession,
> And pleasant was his absolution.
> He was an easy man to give penance,
> There as he wist to have a good pittance . . .
> . . . Instead of weeping and prayers
> Men might give silver to the poor friars.

His Pardoner, too, had his wallet

> Brimful of pardons come from Rome all hot,

together with a store of relics which he found very profitable for the extraction of money from the pockets of the faithful. The prominent feature of the poet's portraits of the monk and nun of his time is their air of prosperity. The world went well with them both, as shown alike in their manners and their dress. In her case it is only politely hinted that she was of goodly proportions, but he is more bluntly described:—

> He was a lord full fat and in good point.

We must not, however, from this think that everyone was degenerate, and that the salt of religious life had wholly lost its savour. Langland has given us in his hero, Piers the Plowman, the picture, drawn from contemporary life, of one who had followed truth for fifty long years, who whether he digged or delved, sowed or reaped, did everything from Christian motive; while as to Chaucer, there is no more beautiful character to be found in English literature than his picture of the parson or secular parish priest—a man poor in substance but rich in holy thought and work—who did not allow rain or thunder to prevent his trudging to the furthest end of his wide and scattered parish to visit his parishioners in sickness or distress; who instead of going to London in search of preferment, stayed at home to shepherd the flock committed to him; who, in a word, sought no honour for himself,

> But Christ's lore and His Apostles twelve,
> He taught, but first he followed it himselve.

Many causes, however, were now at work to bring about a change in religious thought and feeling. The concluding years of the fourteenth century were a period of unrest for various reasons, social and political, as well as ecclesiastical. In the political world the power had gradually passed out of the hands of the baronage into those of the commons, while social changes had put life into the classes below.

The havoc wrought by the Black Death, whose ravages it is hardly possible to exaggerate, with its result of shortness of labour and demands for higher wages, awakened aspirations which culminated in the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. And along with this social and political awakening, knowledge was making itself more widely felt. Men began to think and write in the homely English tongue, which appealed to all, and when writers like Langland and Chaucer showed up abuses in Church and State in language which all could understand, the doom of those abuses was sealed, however long the end might be delayed. It was reserved, however, for Wycliffe to impart the final impulse to this current which had set in. He did this when, about 1380, he issued the first translation of the Bible in English; and by degrees he became the central figure of the movement, especially in its religious aspect.

John Wycliffe was a man of whose character and work very various estimates have been formed, and it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss them in detail. None can dispute his influence, whether they approve of it or not. He stood in the first rank of learned men at Oxford, and he set himself resolutely to face the problems of his time. It was impossible for him to be satisfied with things as they were, either in Church or State. Men were tired of the tyranny of the Papal See, and when to the other abuses which had grown up the Papacy added the scandal of two rival Popes, one at Rome and one at Avignon, each claiming equal power over the Church, thoughtful men like Wycliffe easily broke free from their allegiance. At first he was only a reformer, anxious to get rid of abuses in practice, but by degrees he went further. He felt that the influence of his sworn enemies, the monks and friars, had its roots not in practice but in doctrine—in the sacerdotal claim which derived its power from the prevailing view of the Mass—and he went on to attack the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and other dogmas closely connected with it. Not only by his own preaching from his pulpit at Lutterworth and by the publication of pamphlet after pamphlet, but by means of "poor preachers," whom he organized and sent out, in imitation of the friars, he endeavoured to bring his teaching home to the common people. His followers became known as Lollards, and Lollardry took firm hold of Shropshire, as it did more or less of all the midlands, between the Thames and the Trent.

The evidence of this is somewhat fragmentary and circumstantial, but it appears conclusive. It groups itself largely round two names, who were regarded by one party as heretics, and by the other as martyrs for the truth. The first of these was William Thorpe, a priest who comes into notice in the year 1407, when he preached a sermon in St. Chad's Church, Shrewsbury, in which he inveighed strongly against the abuses of the Church, and promulgated the special views held by the Lollards on the sacrament of the altar and other matters. It is not probable that he took this bold step without encouragement. Sir Roger Acton, who sympathized with his views, resided in the town,[1] and Thorpe himself was probably connected with the neighbourhood. His views did not indeed meet with encouragement from the town authorities, for he was thrown into prison, and a few weeks later was removed to Lambeth, when he was arraigned before the Archbishop of Canterbury on a formal complaint from the Bailiffs and Common Council. This Archbishop was Thomas Arundel, brother of Richard Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, and as such was well acquainted with Shrewsbury and the neighbourhood. Thorpe's examination before him is given in detail in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, and the Archbishop's questions seem to show that he was speaking from personal knowledge. He appears, moreover, anxious not only to be fair to his prisoner, but if possible to give him a loophole of escape from the consequences of his opinions; and as there is no record of any further punishment being inflicted on Thorpe, and no record of his recanting them, there is at least a probability that local influence was sufficiently strong to procure his release.

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[1] Owen and Blakeway's *History of Shrewsbury*, vol. i., p. 202 [note].

The other prominent Lollard around whom interest centres was a man of higher position and greater influence. This was Sir John Oldcastle, known also by courtesy as Lord Cobham from his having married the heiress of that title. It may be well, however, in passing, to allude to some other men of position in this part of England whose fostering care did much to promote the spread of the new opinions. At a period somewhat before that in which Sir John Oldcastle became conspicuous as a Lollard, more than one of the contemporary chroniclers mention among the English nobility and knighthood the following as favouring Lollardry:—Richard Stury, Lewis Clifford, John Clanvowe, Thomas Latimer, and John Montague.[1] Two at least of these held property in Shropshire. The family of Stury belonged to Rossall, near Shrewsbury, and were closely associated with the town itself. This same Richard Stury was one of the twelve burgesses appointed by the Bailiffs and commonalty of the Town of Salop, under the advice of the Earl of Arundel, in the year 1381, as a Committee to reform abuses and secure better order among the inhabitants; and another Richard Stury, apparently his grandson, was one of the first aldermen of the borough, and served the office of bailiff no less than four times.[1]

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[1] Walsingham gives these names twice with a slight variation, vol. ii., p. 159, and p. 216; Trokelow also, p. 174 (Rolls series).

The family of Clifford originally belonged to Herefordshire, where, at Clifford Castle, on the Wye, near to Hay, tradition says that Rosamund Clifford—the "Fair Rosamund" of Henry II.—was born. In connection with her the family came into their Shropshire estates, Henry having granted to her father the important Manor of Corfham in Corvedale in the year 1178.[2]

It will be seen that if the representatives of families like these gave their support and favour to the Lollards, the system would not fail to gain a secure footing, both in Shrewsbury and the county generally. And this probability is increased when we turn to study the career of Sir John Oldcastle himself. Though it does not appear that he possessed any property actually in Shropshire, he was closely connected with its borderland. He was probably born at no great distance from its southern boundary, where his family were Lords of the Manor of Almeley, near Weobley, in Herefordshire; and when at a later period of his life he was in hiding, his first place of concealment was in the neighbourhood of Malvern, not far from the boundary in another direction.

It is beyond the scope of this book to trace his career in detail, or to do more than allude to the opposite opinions expressed as to his character—opinions which on the one hand made him the original of Shakespeare's Sir John Falstaff, and on the other regarded him as a martyred saint. He was probably neither one nor the other, for though a trusted friend of Henry V., there is no trace of dissoluteness in the friendship, and on the other hand, though he began by a sincere devotion to the religious principles which he believed to be the truth, he can hardly be acquitted later on of crime against the political and social order of the realm. Shropshire, however, was closely, if indirectly, associated with the end of his career. Having been arrested for heresy, and tried before Archbishop Arundel in 1413, he escaped from the Tower and remained in hiding for over three years, partly in London, but mainly in the West Midlands, and his immunity from discovery for so long a time is the best proof both of his personal popularity and of the spread of the opinions with which he was identified. At length, however, the end came, and it was on the Shropshire border that the arrest was made. Local tradition says that his last place of concealment was among the Montgomeryshire hills near Meifod,[1] and here, in 1417, he was captured by the emissaries of Lord Powis after a severe struggle, in which some of his captors were slain, and he himself severely wounded. Conveyed in a horse litter first to Welshpool, and afterwards to London, he was hung, and then burnt in St. Giles' Fields, in December of that year.

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[1] Owen and Blakeway, vol. i., p. 169, and p. 214.

[2] *Shropshire Archæological Society's Transactions*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 252.

After his death the power of Lollardry as an aggressive force waned and gradually died away, but the seed had been sown and was in due time to bear fruit. That fruit came to full maturity in the Puritanism of the seventeenth century, but before then another great religious upheaval was to take place for which Lollardry had helped to prepare. That upheaval was the religious movement which we speak of as the Reformation.

(4) THE REFORMATION AND PURITANISM

The Reformation, it should be remembered, was an inevitable fact of history apart from its religious aspect. For a century and a half before the accession of

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[1] Readers of Tennyson will remember his description of Sir John Oldcastle among the Welsh hills (*Ballads and other Poems*, 1880).

Henry VIII. undercurrents had been at work which were certain sooner or later to produce their result. As already mentioned, the old baronage with its feudal rights had almost disappeared in the Wars of the Roses; the towns had risen into importance, and their citizens of the trading class had become an important factor in the state; while the Black Death and its effect on wages had awakened aspirations in the peasantry of which they were incapable at an earlier period. And alongside of these political and social changes, a new and unthought of stimulus had been given to the intellectual progress of the nation. Poets and prose writers had not only written books which spoke to the people in their own tongue, but the invention of printing had brought these books increasingly within their reach, and thus the New Learning, as it was called, was everywhere making its way and shedding its light, until men refused any longer to bow to mere authority, but dared to think for themselves, with the result that the dogmas of the Church had to face a criticism undreamt of in earlier ages. This criticism was helped by the state of the Church itself. Monasticism and the system of the friars had alike done their work and become a byeword for what was degenerate and corrupt; and while the assumptions of the priesthood had been constantly growing, their power for good had been as constantly diminishing, until the alienation between clergy and laity was almost complete. The appeal to scripture which Wycliffe and the Lollards had begun, and which had been stimulated by his translation of the Bible into English, had not been made in vain, and it was only a question of time when, to borrow a comparison from the Book of Job, the great wind should come from the wilderness and smite the four corners of the house of mediæval Papacy, and bring it in ruin on the heads of those whom it sheltered.

The immediate cause of the rupture with Rome was little creditable to anyone concerned, for it had its origin in the headstrong will and unbridled passions of Henry VIII. Shropshire had been familiar with the figures of his elder brother Arthur and his Spanish bride Katharine of Arragon, when they had presided over the Council of the Marches and kept their court at Ludlow Castle. But Prince Arthur died after only a few months of married life, while his father, Henry VII., still reigned; and his death brought a difficulty to the king. The weakness of Henry VII. was his love of money, and Katharine had brought with her a rich dowry which he was unwilling to lose. The difficulty was got over by espousing Arthur's widow to his younger brother Henry, then a boy of eleven. The result was what might have been anticipated; Henry, when he grew up and came to the throne, soon tired of this wife, who had been provided for him without his choice, and who by this time was faded in person as well as grave and solemn in disposition and manner. The sprightly and vivacious Anne Boleyn was much more to his taste, and in the light of her attractions he developed scruples as to the validity of his marriage with Katharine.

It is beyond the scope of this work to trace the proceedings in connection with the divorce and his rupture with the Pope. Henry threw off the Papal supremacy, but it was only to assume it himself, and he never sympathised with the doctrines of the Reformation. As far as he himself was concerned, he was an unintentional promoter of it as a religious movement, and there is room for the satirical lines of Gray, who speaks of his reign as a time

> When love could teach a monarch to be wise,
> And Gospel light first dawned from Boleyn's eyes.

The religious progress of the Reformation is to be found in the history of the reigns of his three children. That of Edward VI. was marked by much solid work, especially in the two editions of the Prayer Book in English, but it was marred by a spoliation of Church property which equalled, if it did not surpass, the suppression of the monasteries in Henry's time. Then came the re-action of Mary's reign—the effort to restore mediæval doctrines and usages, and to heal the breach with the Papacy, but the time had gone by when this was possible, and the attempt to check the rising tide only added to its force when Mary passed away and Elizabeth succeeded to the throne. Her long and prosperous reign brought comparative peace both to Church and State. Under her strong hand, and by the wise counsels of her advisers, discordant elements were brought into a measure of harmony, and the reformed religion was generally accepted as that of the nation.

As to the question how the Reformation movement affected Shropshire, and what part the county took in it, the answer is difficult, for the materials are scanty. The answer, however, lies in the direction of what we have seen in connection with Lollardry. The West Midlands were largely leavened with the Reformed opinions, but the people of Shropshire have never been made of the stuff out of which martyrs are manufactured; and so all through the Reformation period they were largely content to go quietly on their way, letting others alone, and asking only to be let alone themselves.

As far as can be gathered from a cursory study of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, although it is often difficult to pick out facts from his prolix narrative, Shropshire furnished, with perhaps two doubtful exceptions,[1] no contingent to the martyrs who fed the flames of Smithfield or elsewhere; while the record of the Churches of Shrewsbury tells us of vicars undisturbed in their duties all through the period of change.[2] In 1547, indeed, there was a burning in the Market Square of that town. Its victims, however, were not of flesh and blood, but only

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[1] *Acts and Monuments* (edition 1842), vol. v., p. 550, and vol. vii., p. 402. Compare *Shropshire Archæological Society's Transactions*, vol. iii., p. 258, and Fuller's *Worthies* (edition 1811), vol. ii., p. 256.

[2] *Cf.* the Author's *Shrewsbury*, p. 140.

"the pycture of our Lady owt of St. Mary's, and the pycture of Mary Mawdelen, and the pycture of St. Chaddes owt of Sainct Chadd's church in the same towne."[1]

This was done in obedience to an injunction issued under the authority of Edward VI., soon after his accession, and throws light on the attitude which seems to have prevailed in the county towards the various changes made. It was an attitude on the part of the people generally of something not far removed from indifference; they were content to obey orders and accept changes from the ruling power, but they had no strong feeling about the matter either way. This attitude is traceable in the acts of the municipal authorities, as, for example, in regard to the dissolution of the monasteries. The Shrewsbury Corporation apparently accepted the fiat of the king for dissolving their great Abbey as a matter of course, but they petitioned that, being dissolved, it should be utilized either as a house of reception for distinguished visitors or as a school. They did not oppose; they only desired that the town might be benefited by the change when it was made. So with the spoliation of the Church goods under Edward VI.; no doubt there were murmurs, but there is no trace of active opposition.

It is not intended by this to imply that individuals did not feel strongly on both sides, or did not give expression to their feelings on occasion; and no better illustration can be given of this attitude of individuals than the well-known story of the death of Edward Burton, of Longner, as related in Phillips's *History of Shrewsbury*—

> Edward Burton was a zealous assertor of the Gospel all Queen Mary's days . . . He one day sitting in his parlour alone, meditating on the troubles of the times, and the deliverances he and others had found though many had suffered, while he was thus reflecting, he heard a general ringing of all the bells in Shrewsbury, which he concluded must be for the accession of the Lady Elizabeth to the throne, by the death of Queen Mary. Longing to know the truth, and not daring to send any of his servants

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[1] *Shropshire Archæological Society's Transactions*, vol. iii., p. 258.

to enquire, he sent his eldest son, a youth about sixteen years of age, ordering him, if the bells rang for the Lady Elizabeth's accession, to throw his hat up into the air at some place from whence he might see it, to gratify his expectation. The young man, finding it was as expected, threw up his hat, which his father seeing, was suddenly affected with such extremity of joy for the liberty and comfort God's people had a prospect of, that he retired from the window where he saw the sign, with difficulty gained a chair, and immediately expired. By his last will he ordered that his body should be buried in the Parish Church of St. Chad in Shrewsbury, and that no Mass-monger should be present at his interment. His friends, designing to execute his will in this respect, brought his corpse to the church, and were there met by the Curate, Mr. John Marshall, who said that Mr. Burton was an heretic, and should not be buried in his church. One of Mr. Burton's friends replied, "As to his being an heretic, God would judge at the last day." The Curate replied, "Judge God or judge Devil, he shall not be buried in this Church." His friends were obliged to carry his body back again and bury it in his own garden. His epitaph declares that he

Truly professing Christianity,
Was like Christ Jesus in a garden laid,
Where he shall rest in Peace, till it be said,
"Come, faithful Servant, come receive with Me
A just reward for thy Integrity."

We pass on to the later developments of the Reformation movement. When the reign of Elizabeth was drawing to a close, there were in England three religious parties whose differences were becoming more and more accentuated, though the spirit of active persecution was gradually dying out. There were, first, those who had never accepted the change of doctrine and still owned allegiance to the Pope. Alongside of these were the adherents of the Reformed Faith, who accepted as its best exponent the formularies of the English Church and Episcopacy as its proper form of government. But under the influence of the Continental Reformers a third party had grown up. These desired a more entire break with the past, for which they had no reverence, and they could not tolerate anything that was held in common with Rome, however useful or harmless in itself. It might be episcopacy, or it might be the use of a vestment, or of a Liturgy, but in their eyes all such usages alike were tainted with superstition.

The members of this party at first were few in number, and confined to those who possessed little influence, but as time went on this was changed. Men of position and character threw in their adhesion to these principles, and they gained weight indirectly from another cause.

From the time when the Stuarts came to the throne there began to be an increasing divergence of personal character between those whose religion was that of the Court and those who were removed from its influence. The people began to contrast more and more the loose lives of men in high places with the strict lives of those whose revolt from Rome was most complete. The members of this party called themselves Precisians, but that name was lost in the nickname of Puritans, and they claimed to seek a high ideal of personal life. This had weight with others. The Puritan might be solemn and sour in his demeanour, but he lived a moral life; he might despise the sports in which others found delight, but his motive was religious, and as such it won respect.

Meanwhile a parallel divergence was going on in the State. The party of those who adopted the doctrine and discipline of the Reformed Church of England were for the most part strong also in their attachment to the Monarchy. The Puritan party, who gradually separated themselves from the Church as Nonconformists, were largely imbued with a desire for increased political as well as religious liberty, and in many cases favoured a Republican form of government.

These differences, as everyone knows, went on increasing until they culminated in civil war. The effects of that war on Shropshire in its political aspect form the subject of another chapter. We have only here to do with its effects viewed from the religious standpoint.

When, on January 30th, 1649, the head of Charles I. fell on the scaffold of Whitehall, it marked not only the triumph of Republicanism over Monarchy, but the triumph of Puritanism over the Church, for parallel with encroachments on the prerogative of the king, which ended in his death, there had been going on the enforcement of changes in the Established Church.

In 1643 the Parliament passed a Bill for the abolition of Episcopacy, and this was followed by the appointment of the Westminster Assembly, who undertook the revising of the Church formularies. Ministers were ejected from their cures as "scandalous" or "malignant," and funds were raised by the sale of Church property. In January, 1645, the use of the Prayer Book was made penal, and the Directory for Public Worship substituted.

At first, indeed, Puritanism seemed satisfied with changes that arose naturally out of the adoption of Presbyterianism and its dread of everything that savoured of Rome, but by degrees the power passed out of the hands of the Presbyterians into those of the Independents, with the result of increased narrowness and intolerance. Meanwhile, however, the inevitable reaction set in. The execution of Charles had shown to what length the Parliamentary party could go in regard to the State, as that of Archbishop Laud had shown in regard to the Church, and when the power fell from the strong hand of Oliver Cromwell into that of his son, the public opinion of the country was ready to hail with delight the restoration of the old order in both. Then came retaliation, the first step in which was the passing of the Act of Uniformity, by which in turn the Presbyterian Incumbents of the Churches were ejected in favour of the old Vicars if still living, or of others episcopally ordained. The comparative blame on each side in this matter of ejection, it need not be said, has been a subject of fierce controversy, but surely at this time we may learn to look on it calmly. It seems clear from a study on the one hand of Walker's *Sufferings of the Clergy*, and on the other of Calamy's *Nonconformists' Memorial*, that there were at least as many episcopal ministers deprived by the Puritans in the Commonwealth as there were Presbyterians deprived at the Restoration.

In Shropshire there were examples of both, but a study of the Parish Registers of the period, and a consideration of the prevailing political sentiment as shown in other ways, goes to show that feelings were in this case, as in the Reformation period, less strongly stirred in this part of the West than in the further Midlands and the East; and that, as a whole, Salopians were fairly content to live and let live. This is shown for example in the numerous instances in the Parish Registers in which the same Parochial Incumbent went on through the various changes, and the regard of his parishioners was shown by his being requested still to keep the Registers when the Parliament ordained the appointment of an official for that purpose.

But we have other proofs beyond this. In 1646 a system was inaugurated which was intended to establish Presbyterianism. Instead of the existing divisions into dioceses, archdeaconries, and rural deaneries, the parishes were grouped in *classes*, and the names which occur in connection with these *classes* throw considerable light on the public opinion of any particular district. It appears from the list published in 1647 that the County of Salop was divided into six "Classicall Presbyteries," of which the first included the parishes of Shrewsbury and the neighbourhood, the second those round Oswestry, the third Bridgnorth, the fourth Wem, the fifth Ludlow, and the sixth Stretton. A particular case will best illustrate the position of affairs. In the list of Puritan nominations to livings, to be found in the Journal of the Parliament, occurs under the date of June 5th, 1648, the presentation of James Cressett to Cound void by the death of Richard Wood.[1] A generation before this, Edward Cressett, of Upton Cressett, near Bridgnorth, three of whose ancestors had been Sheriff of the county, married the heiress of Sir Henry

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[1] Shaw's *Church under the Commonwealth*, vol. ii., p. 257.

Townsend of Cound, and came into that property, though he retained his seat at Cotes in his old neighbourhood. He had a numerous family, of whom James was the fourth son. This James was educated at Oriel College, Oxford, and married a daughter of John Edwards, of Middleton Scriven.[1] He was apparently a comparatively young man when he was appointed "Minister" of Cound in 1648.

On turning to the list of the Shropshire "Classes," we find among the list of laymen "fit to bee of the fifth Classis," "Edward Cresset of Cotes, gent.,"[2] showing that other members of the family sympathized with the Parliament in religious matters, and no doubt used their influence for the promotion of their relative.

We now turn to the Register Books of Cound Church, and there, under 1662, we find two entries. The first is this:—

> Ye 3^d day of August Mr. James Cressett, Rector of Cund, did publikely in ye time of Divine service read ye 39 Articles of ye Church of England, and declared his unfeyned assent to ye same, according to ye Statute in that case provided. Witnesses hereunto [five signatures].

The second entry is as follows:—

> The 17th day of August, 1662. Mr. James Cressett, Rector of Cond, the same Lord's Day, in time of Divine Service, publiquely read the declaration in the Act for Uniformitie expressed touching the Unlawfulnes of the Covenant after the reading of his Certificat of his Subscription to the aforesaid declaration, and did the same day solemnely and publiquely read the Morning and Evening Prayer appointed to be read by the said Act, and did declare his unfeigned assent and consent thereunto, and to everything therein conteined. In pr'sence and heareing of [five signatures, including Robt. Cressett (his nephew)].

The Act of Uniformity had required all Ministers to assent to the Prayer Book, and repudiate the Covenant on pain of immediate ejection from their Benefices, with the further important addition that those who had not been episcopally ordained must immediately seek orders at the hand of some bishop.

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[1] *Heralds' Visitation of Shropshire* (Harleian Society), vol. i., p. 158.

[2] Shaw's *Church under the Commonwealth*, vol. ii., p. 411.

The extracts just given with regard to James Cressett enable us to trace his career with tolerable certainty, and it may be taken as typical of many. It shows that the Puritan ministers were not necessarily of an inferior social position to those they displaced; and also that the authorities in London were willing to be guided by local opinion and family preferences. As there is no record of James Cressett's seeking episcopal ordination at the Restoration, it seems probable that he was episcopally ordained before his admission in 1648. And, lastly, the record of his conforming, whether accompanied by re-ordination or not, presents him as typical of those—of whom there were certainly a considerable number in this part of England—who had sympathized with much that the Parliament had done, but had none of that zeal for self-sacrifice which led others to face poverty and persecution rather than conform.

The number of Presbyterian ministers throughout the county who either resigned their livings in 1660 or were ejected in 1662, appears to be thirty-nine,[1] and among them were some whose departure was a distinct loss to the Church—men like John Bryan and Francis Tallents, of Shrewsbury, Rowland Nevett, of Oswestry, and Joshua Barnet, of Wrockwardine, not to mention others; but no account of Puritanism in Shropshire would be complete without some notice of the most conspicuous of her Puritan sons, though he was not actually beneficed within her borders—namely, Richard Baxter.

Baxter was born in 1615 in the parish of High Ercall, where the register of his baptism is as follows:—

> Richard sonne and heyre of Richard Baxter of Eaton Constantyne, gent. and of Beatrice his wief baptised the xixth of November 1615.

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[1] I am indebted for this calculation to the writer of the chapter on the Civil War, who has made a special study of the period.

He appears from childhood to have been weak and uncertain in health, and this fact gave seriousness to his character. As he expressed it, "Weakness and pain helped me to study how to die: that set me on studying how to live." He spent some time at the school at Donnington, in the next parish to Eaton Constantine, but he tells us that his education was very defective, and that he had mainly taught himself. His family belonged to the Church, but he draws a sad picture of the clergy in the Shropshire parishes around his home, and of the way in which the Sundays were spent during the *regime* of the *Book of Sports*. It is evident that the better lives of the Puritans attracted him from an early period, and influenced all his later life. In 1638 he received episcopal ordination from the Bishop of Worcester, and he became Master of the Grammar School at Dudley. His first ministerial charge was at Bridgnorth, to the inhabitants of which he dedicated his *Saints' Rest*. In 1640, however, he moved to Kidderminster as assistant to the old vicar of that town, and for the next two years his work there met with much success. On the breaking out of the Civil War he acted for some time as chaplain in the Parliamentary army, where he used his influence to mitigate the extreme views, both in religion and politics, which were beginning to take possession of the soldiery. He was soon, however, glad to return to Kidderminster, which was his home for the next fourteen years.

During this time he exercised great influence not only in the town but over a wide district. He was the recognized adviser of the Puritan party all through the West Midlands, and practically exercised episcopal control over the ministers and their congregations. His influence was always exerted on the side of moderation and tolerance, and when Cromwell assumed the supreme power, Baxter did not hesitate to tell him to his face that "the honest people of the land took their ancient monarchy to be a blessing and not an evil."

At the Restoration he was made one of the King's chaplains, and was offered the Bishopric of Hereford, but he declined it. It is interesting to note that if his decision had been otherwise, half of Shropshire would have been under his episcopal charge.

The Act of Uniformity of 1662 brought him trouble, for he could not make up his mind to conform, and so he left Kidderminster; but that year also brought him the greatest comfort of the next twenty years of his career, namely, a wife. Some time before, after the partial destruction of Apley Castle in the war, Margaret Charlton had come to live at Kidderminster with her mother, and so the two whose early homes had both been under the shadow of the Wrekin, became acquainted. Baxter was considerably the older, being not far short of fifty, whereas she was little more than twenty; but her heart had gone out to the pastor who had helped her in spiritual things, and when he had stipulated on the one hand that marriage should not interfere with his ministerial work, and on the other that her property should be secured to her, they were married. It proved a singularly happy union, though they had many trials to face together.

Not very long after their wedding Baxter spent some time in prison, but his wife shared his incarceration, which was not very severe, and he said of her: "My wife was never so cheerful a companion to me as in prison; and she had brought so many necessaries that we kept house as contentedly and comfortably as at home." He unfortunately lost her in 1681, and he was left to face his troubles alone.

In 1685 some passages in his *Paraphrase on the New Testament* were held to be seditious, and he was tried by Judge Jeffreys, who took the opportunity of insulting and browbeating the old man after his fashion. He was condemned and sentenced to pay a heavy fine, with imprisonment till he did so, but through the exertions of Lord Powis, the fine was remitted, and after an imprisonment of eighteen months he was released. The remaining five years of his life were undisturbed. Years before, at Kidderminster, he had written the book by which he is best remembered—*The Saints' Everlasting Rest;* and in December, 1691, he was called himself to enter into that Rest, which he had long desired, and for which his book has helped to prepare many, both in his lifetime and the generations since.

It may be said of Baxter that in many respects he was typical of the Salopian way of looking at things: resolute when principle was involved, but prepared to tolerate those who could not see things as he saw them; ready to give as well as to take, and growing ever gentler as age drew on. In a passage in his *Autobiography*, he sums up his experience of life in words which may well end this review of the time in which he lived:—

> I now see more good and more evil in all men than heretofore I did. I see that good men are not so good as I once thought they were, but have more imperfections: and that nearer approach and fuller trial doth make the best appear more weak and faulty than their admirers at a distance think. And I find that few are so bad as either malicious enemies or censorious separating professors do imagine. Even in the wicked, usually there is more for grace to make advantage of, and more to testifie for God and holiness, than I once believed there had been.

(5) QUAKERISM AND METHODISM

These two religious movements are grouped together, not as connected in time, but in the leading idea which gave rise to and pervaded both. Each had its origin in mysticism. George Fox went up and down the country preaching that there was an inward light which illumined the individual soul, and had no need of external Church organizations; John Wesley having drunk from the fountain of mysticism in his Oxford days went up and down preaching the doctrine of individual conversion by the direct agency of the Spirit; and though he was himself a pre-eminent organizer, all the rules he laid down for his followers were subservient to this prevailing idea.

Quakerism began in the Puritan period. Fox, its founder, was born in Leicestershire in 1624. Naturally of a meditative disposition, his religious convictions deepened until he became impressed with the idea that he must forsake all, and devote himself to the promulgation of what appeared to him a revelation of new truth. Accordingly he wandered from place to place, Bible in hand, prepared to preach wherever he could find an audience; and he was specially ready to bear his testimony in the interruption of any service conducted by one whom he regarded as a mere outward "professor"; for he was a thorough Puritan both in this and in his hatred of "steeple houses" and bells. His views, however, went further than religion; he wished to remodel society. He declared that the Lord forbade him to put off his hat to any, high or low, and required him to address even the greatest with *thee* and *thou*. The natural result was that he found himself in perpetual conflict with the authorities, both civil and religious, and he was well acquainted with the inside of prisons. His tenets met with no more favour from the Puritans than from the Church party, and even the gentle and tolerant Baxter could not find anything to say in their favour.

Strange, however, as it may seem, Fox met with great success, and gained many adherents, particularly in the northern part of England, a success which was no doubt helped by the persecutions he met with and the northern love of fair play. He also had a large number of adherents in Wales.

As regards Shropshire, which he visited in 1657 and 1667, though he appears to have secured a considerable following in some parts, particularly in the Coalbrookdale district and the Welsh border, his tenets do not seem to have taken a very firm hold. There is, indeed, more than one record of Shrewsbury prison being tenanted by

Quakers, but in every instance they seem, by their persistent opposition to authority, to have brought the fate on themselves. From the beginning there was close union between the Society in Shropshire and in the neighbouring part of Wales, and in 1669 it was agreed by "representatives from ye several Meetings in Shropshire, Montgomeryshire, and Merionethshire," to purchase "a Meeting Room and an enclosure for a burying place" in Shrewsbury. The site chosen was on St. John's Hill, and a meeting place was erected there. This underwent rebuilding in the middle of the eighteenth century, and again in 1805, and is now used for the offices of the Atcham Union. The last interment in the little burial ground adjoining seems to have taken place from Coalbrookedale in 1834.

An extract from one of the earlier Registers of this meeting house will serve to illustrate several points in connection with the Quakers as a whole, and as they existed in this county. It occurs under the year 1680:—

> Md. James Farmer proposed his purpose of marriage with Elizabeth Jordan, the xxth of the 10th month last, which was consented unto. And also this 17th of 11th month, 1680, he hath satisfyed frends concerning making over pt. of his estate to his children which he had by his former wife.

This memorandum is followed by the marriage register itself:—

> James Farmer, of ye pish. of Cound, yeoman, and Elizabeth Jordan of Tuexbury co. Glosester, spinster, dau. of Tho. Jordan, of Stoke Archard, yeoman, 13th day, 12th mo. called February, in public meeting house of Tuexbury.

In illustration of what has already been said, it will be noticed that the entry speaks of the society by their proper title of Friends, Quakers having been only a nickname; and it illustrates their peculiar phraseology, Fox having laid it down that the days of the week and the month should not be spoken of by the ordinary names, which he regarded as heathenish. It also shows the social class which largely recruited the ranks of the sect, and in particular mentions the family of Farmer, who were among the most prominent members in this county. It alludes, besides, to what became a distinguishing characteristic of the Quakers, namely, the exercise of philanthropy: before James Farmer might take on himself new responsibilities, the Friends required to be assured that he had cared for his first family. This contained in germ that *esprit de corps*—that care for the needs of their poorer brethren—for which the Society of Friends has always been remarkable. The entry also incidentally emphasizes the fact that the year formerly began in March, not in January: February is spoken of as the twelfth month instead of the second.[1]

We now pass to the more important and more widespread movement inaugurated by Wesley. This is not the place to attempt an estimate of John Wesley's work as a whole, or to decide his true place in the ecclesiastical history of the eighteenth century. Opinions will always be divided as to the relative blame to be attached to him and to the authorities of the English Church for the fact that his movement developed into a separate denomination against his clearly expressed wish, but a calm study of the matter shows that, as usual, there was fault on both sides. The dread of what was called enthusiasm was the bugbear of the eighteenth century in all directions, the inevitable result being a decay of earnestness; and Wesley's attempt to awaken the sleepers only shared the treatment which fell to the lot of all the leaders of the Evangelical movement.

It must always be a matter of regret that the Church authorities could not better read the signs of the times—it was a great opportunity lost of utilizing a zeal which had in it infinite possibilities for good; but on the other hand Wesley, in his later days, was led into adopting a policy that made his position as a Churchman really untenable. When, in 1784, he took the step of ordaining his preachers by the laying on of his own hands, he made a breach which any wish on his part to the contrary could not prevent from widening into permanent separation. It was a step which met with the strong disapproval of his brother Charles, and called forth from him the well-known epigram:—

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[1] The position and influence of Quaker families in the county in the first half of the eighteenth century is evidenced by the fact that in 1718, and again in 1727, Shrewsbury was chosen as the meeting place for members of the body from all parts of England.—Phillips, *History of Shrewsbury*, p. 212.

> How easy now are bishops made
> At man or woman's whim;
> Wesley his hand on Coke hath laid,
> But who laid hands on him?

It is not necessary, however, to approve every act of John Wesley in order to value the great work he did for the revival of earnest personal religion. Probably no one since the days of St. Paul was "in labours more abundant." If anyone will take the trouble of analysing his *Journal* on almost any page at which he may open it, tracing out the distances travelled—almost always on horseback—and the number of sermons preached, he will wonder first at the physical strength he displayed; and when he remembers that Wesley's sermons were intended to arouse, and therefore involved an earnest delivery, and that, moreover, they were delivered to all sorts of audiences under all sorts of difficult circumstances—sometimes in crowded and ill-ventilated rooms, and sometimes out of doors to great crowds, who were often more or less hostile—he will wonder how mind as well as body bore the strain. And it must also be recollected that Wesley took his share in literary work. The energy with which he did this may be illustrated by a single extract:—

> I now applied myself in earnest to the writing of Mr. Fletcher's life, having procured the best materials I could. To this I dedicated all the time I could spare till November, from five in the morning till eight at night. These are my studying hours; I cannot write longer in a day without hurting my eyes.

At this time he was eighty-three years old.[1]

His *Journal* records no less than eighteen visits to Shrewsbury, the first in 1761, and the last in 1790, and in almost every case he preached at some other place in the county as well. Wem and Whitchurch on the one side, and Broseley and Madeley on the other, received several visits from him. There is no record on any of these visits of anything like the insults he met with in some places; nothing worse than that on one occasion he says:—

> I came to Shrewsbury between five and six, and preached to a large and quiet congregation. As we returned the rabble were noisy enough; but they used only their tongues; so all was well.[2]

The permanent success he met with is attested by the fact that Shrewsbury was made the head of a circuit as early as 1765, when there was a roll of 587 members, and as he speaks of the pleasure with which he stayed at other places in the county, the whole number of adherents within its borders must have been considerable.

Two helpers in immediate connection with Shrewsbury must be mentioned. One was Mrs. Glynne, a lady of good position who lived on Dogpole, and used her ample means for the promotion of the cause in which she was interested. It was she who in 1762 sent him in a post-chaise to Wem to keep an engagement there, but the roads were so bad with mud and snow that the horses broke their traces, and he and his companions had difficulty in making the journey at all; and the *Journal* mentions many other instances of her kindness. She lived till 1799, and there is a tablet to her memory in St. Julian's Church. The other helper was John Appleton, who had made a considerable fortune as a currier. In 1761 he fitted up the old Hall of the Shearmen, near to St. Julian's Church, as a Methodist Chapel at his own expense, and twenty years later he, also at his own expense, built a new Chapel in Hill's Lane, which Wesley himself came to open on March 27th, 1781. Three years later he came again to preach Appleton's funeral sermon.

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[1] September, 1786. [2] March, 1769.

The cause of Methodism was also helped by Captain Jonathan Scott, of Betton, by Sir Richard Hill, of Hawkstone, and others, but it owed most of all to Rev. John Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley. Others came and went, preaching and then passing on, but Fletcher lived in the middle of the county as a parochial clergyman for twenty-five years, and so had a more abiding local influence. Fletcher not only preached, but year after year lived, as it were within the sight of all, the higher life to which he invited them. If Wesley represented St. Paul, it was Fletcher who represented the more loving spirit of St. John; nay, it is said that when Voltaire was challenged to produce a character as perfect as Jesus Christ, he at once mentioned Fletcher, of Madeley.[1] Born in Switzerland of a military family, and himself a soldier for a few years, he came into Shropshire about 1752 as Tutor to the two sons of Mr. Thomas Hill, of Tern Hall (now Attingham), at that time M.P. for Shrewsbury. Here he became attracted by the earnestness of Methodism, and determined to seek Holy Orders. He was accordingly ordained Deacon and Priest on two consecutive Sundays in 1757, and in 1761 was presented by Mr. Hill to Madeley, having previously refused an offer from him of another living, better in value, but with less work.

Madeley was at the time probably one of the roughest villages in Shropshire, the inhabitants being mostly colliers, and Fletcher at first by no means found it a bed of roses, but his efforts and his personal character gradually made themselves felt, until he was universally respected and loved.

Wesley and he became bosom friends. In recording his first visit to Madeley, in July, 1764, Wesley's *Journal* clearly expresses the delight which he felt in the meeting. He says:—

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[1] Abbey and Overton's *English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii., p. 113.

> We went on to Madeley, an exceeding pleasant village, encompassed with trees and hills. [Wesley very rarely noticed scenery.] It was a great comfort to me to converse with a Methodist of the old stamp, denying himself, taking up his cross, and resolved to be altogether a Christian.

This meeting was the first of many, and there was probably no place in England to which Wesley's heart turned more fondly than to Madeley Vicarage. Fletcher, however, had no such iron constitution as Wesley, and he did not know when to pause in his labours. The result was that he broke down from overwork, and though he recovered for a time, he sank under the strain. The account by his wife of his last Sunday may be given in her own words, as it shows not only his character and the earnestness of his work, but also throws light on the services of the Church as conducted in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Having mentioned that he refused the proffered help of a neighbouring clergyman, and that having opened the "reading service" with apparent strength, he soon found it difficult to proceed, but that in the sermon he seemed to forget his weakness, the account goes on:—

> After sermon, he walked up to the communion table, uttering these words, "I am going to throw myself under the wings of the cherubim, before the mercy seat." Here the same distressing scene was renewed with additional solemnity. The people were deeply affected while they beheld him offering up the last languid remains of a life that had been lavishly spent in their service. In going through this last part of his duty, he was exhausted again and again; but his spiritual vigour triumphed over his bodily weakness. After several times sinking on the sacramental table, he still resumed his sacred work, and cheerfully distributed with his dying hand the love memorials of his dying Lord. In the course of this concluding office, which he performed by means of the most astonishing exertions, he gave out several verses of hymns, and delivered many affectionate exhortations to his people, calling upon them at intervals to celebrate the mercy of God in short songs of adoration and praise. And now, having struggled through a service of near four hours' continuance, he was supported, with blessings in his mouth, from the altar to his

chamber, where he lay for some time in a swoon, and from whence he never walked into the world again.

He died the following Sunday, August 14th, 1785. This narrative of the last scene in the life of perhaps the most saintly man which Shropshire has either produced or possessed in any era of its history, may fitly close this sketch of the great religious movements that from time to time have swept across its borders. It is but a sketch, and the necessary omissions are many, but it may serve to show not only how the religious character of Salopians has been built up, but by what various means and agencies —some of them apparently inconsistent with each other— the result has been accomplished.

Time bringeth changes: systems rise—
  Do their appointed work—and fall:
  God hath His purpose in them all:
He changeth not: and He is wise.

THOMAS AUDEN.

FOLK-LORE: LEGENDS AND OLD CUSTOMS

BY CHARLOTTE S. BURNE

(Author of *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, and a Vice-President of the Folk-Lore Society)

WHEN the folk-lore of Shropshire was first brought before the world, some twenty-three years ago, general surprise was expressed at the amount of old custom and superstition still prevailing there. Would that be the case now? It is doubtful. So much has since been recorded of other counties that Salop has been to a great extent "levelled up"; besides which, the lapse of a quarter of a century has beyond question effaced much old tradition.

The social disintegration consequent on the economic changes of the nineteenth century has done its work on folk-lore throughout England. What was living flourishing custom in the beginning of the century had already become a mere shattered group of survivals at its end, while now it is scarcely even that. With custom has gone much of that which social customs enshrine and preserve—the stories, the songs, the riddles, the dramas, the games, for which the old-fashioned social gatherings gave occasion, and which naturally die out when the demand for them ceases.

But only two years ago the Secretary of the Folk-lore Society was desired to take the first throw at a "cocoa-nut shy" on the Wrekin, on the ground that he, being a dark-haired man, would bring luck to the owner, whereas the fair-haired little girl who had been put forward for the purpose would have the contrary effect. The proprietress, spitting on the coin he gave in payment for the privilege, assured him that she "had taken pertikler notice," and that there was "a deal in" the personality of the first customer as securing good or bad trade. For though customs decay, superstition still lives. It may be weakened by the spread of education and the increased facilities for travel of modern days, but it has its roots deep down in human nature—in fear, affection, greed, curiosity, credulity—and it can only change as human nature changes. Until scientific methods of observation and reasoning prevail in every stratum of the population, superstition will never die. *Post hoc, propter hoc*, will still be argued. Tenterden Steeple will be supposed to cause Goodwin Sands; bad neighbours will be credited with bringing evil upon cattle and crops; superstitious fears will cause recourse to superstitious precautions; demand will create supply, and persons will be found to supply charms and magical formulas suited to all kinds of misfortunes, from a sick pig to a lost lover. And so long as medical advice must be paid for, while the village blacksmith or the old man at the woodland cottage refuses even to accept thanks for the remedies he gives, so long will the minor ailments to which flesh is heir be liable to be treated by the charmer rather than by the qualified practitioner.

But in all this there is nothing peculiarly Salopian. Fuller acquaintance with folk-lore shows that the same kinds of superstitious beliefs and practices are practically common to all England; nay, to the British Isles. Even the words of the charming formulas are practically identical in widely-separated districts. The common toothache charm "Peter stood at the gates of Jerusalem," etc., recovered at Baschurch (among other places) in 1879, re-appeared in the Hebrides in 1904, and occurs among the *Anglo-Saxon Leechdoms* (Cockayne iii. 64) of the eighth century. How can this be claimed as *local* folk-lore anywhere? Again, wherever throughout Europe the belief in witchcraft prevails (and where does it not?), we find that the witches form a secret society, renounce the national religion, hold midnight assemblies, are transformed into animals, steal milk, stop teams, cause sickness, and can only be defeated by opposing magic to magic; so that wherever we find the witch we find the charmer also. Once more, wherever belief in a future life is found, belief in *revenants* is found with it, and in civilized and Christian countries still retains certain savage and heathen elements (such as transformation, malicious disposition, residence in certain spots, pursuit of wonted occupations), which are in sharp contrast to the orthodox teaching on the subject. Any local colouring there may be in local witch or ghost stories consists only in their minor features, in the framework of the social life reflected in them; such as the laws of inheritance, the tyrannical squires, the coaches-and-four, which occur in our English country ghost-stories.

Among the wildest of these stories is that of "The Roaring Bull of Bagbury," which is told at Hyssington, on the borders of Salop and Montgomery. There was once a very bad man who lived at Bagbury Hall, who oppressed his labourers and gave them no beer. Only two good deeds were known of him throughout his life: namely, that he once gave an old waistcoat to a poor old man, and some bread and cheese to a poor boy. So after his death his ghost could not rest, and he came again in the farm buildings at Bagbury in the form of an enormous bull (a *flayed* bull, some said!). He roared so loudly and was so riotous that the tiles flew off the roofs and the shutters from the windows. He even came by daylight, and no one could live near him in peace. So it was decided to try and lay him. Twelve parsons were assembled with lighted candles, and they read and read till they got him safely into Hyssington Church. But there he made such a rush that all the candles were blown out except that of an old blind parson named Pigeon, who knew him, and was prepared for his violence, and sheltered his candle in his top-boot. On this the bull, who had become comparatively small and tame, began to grow before their eyes, and swelled till he cracked the walls of the church. At last they got the candles re-lighted at Parson Pigeon's, and regained power over the bull, which gradually diminished as they read till he became so small and weak that he was imprisoned in a snuff-box. Then he parleyed, and petitioned that he might be laid under Bagbury Bridge, and might be allowed to cause every woman who passed over to lose her babe and every mare her foal. But this could not be conceded, and he was condemned to be laid in the Red Sea for a thousand years. Nevertheless, some think that he lies in an old shoe under the door-stone of Hyssington Church, and others dread passing over Bagbury Bridge, and tell of apparitions still to be seen in Bagbury Hall.

Cross the county from west to south-east, from the Welsh hills to Severn-side. In Kinlet Church there is a monument to Sir George Blount and his wife, kneeling, with their children beside them. Sir George, who died in 1584, was the last squire of his name. His only daughter married her father's page, so angering him thereby that he haunted them and their descendants for long after his death. He used to come riding out of a pool, still called Blount's Pool, terrifying the women who went to rinse their clothes there. He would drive his coach and four white horses over the dinner-table where his family were sitting, and so annoyed them that at last they pulled down the old Hall to get rid of him and rebuilt it on a new site, further from the church. The cellars are there still, full of barrels of ale and bottles of wine, but no one dare touch them for fear of angering the ghost, although he was laid in the sea long ago, by parsons reading with lighted candles till all were burnt out but one. And in a recess of his tomb there is (or was as lately as 1886) a small stoppered bottle which the village children regard with terror, for if anyone were to let it drop Old Blount would come again.

A pathetic story is that told of "Madam Pigott." She was the wife of the last of the Pigotts of Chetwynd, in the north-east of Shropshire, on the confines of Staffordshire; and she died in child-birth. Her husband longed for an heir, and when the doctors came to him and told him that mother and babe could not both survive, he bade them "lop the root to save the branch." Thus doomed to death before her time, her spirit could find no rest. Her husband went abroad; the house was shut up and left to caretakers; and she was seen in the gardens of the empty hall, a pale white figure wandering to and fro. "Never mind, child," said the housekeeper to her little niece, who in old age told the story, "it's only Madam Pigott. Put your apron over your head when she goes by, and she will do you no harm." Others in later days said that she flew at midnight out of a trap-door in the roof of (old) Chetwynd Rectory; she turned over a boulder in the lane between Chetwynd and Edgmond in the course of her nightly rambles; she was frequently seen on moonlight nights sitting on the wall of Chetwynd Park where it abuts on Cheney Hill, combing her baby's hair; so that the lane became known as "Madam Pigott's Hill," and a twisted tree-root on which she sometimes seated herself as "Madam Pigott's armchair." But not content with wandering and appearing, she would spring up *en croupe* behind belated riders, especially those who were going to "fetch the doctor" to assist at a birth, and ride behind them till they reached a running water; then she could go no further. So she had to be laid, with the usual ceremony of twelve parsons praying and reading Psalms till all the candles went out but one, which belonged to Mr. Foy, curate of Edgmond,[1] who succeeded in laying her.

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[1] He died as long ago as 1816, but ghosts always continue to be a terror long after they have been "laid."

The local gipsies say that she was first secured in a bottle, which was thrown into Chetwynd Pool, but the bottle was broken, and the ceremony had to be repeated; when, in spite of her entreaties, she was laid in the Red Sea, and the neighbourhood had peace. But there is an oak-tree at the foot of Chetwynd Scaur which still shakes and quivers when all the other trees are still, because Madam Pigott shakes it in her nightly wanderings.

None of these stories, or of hundreds like them which might be told, have any integral connection with the place where they are current. The really local folk-lore of any district is that which is bound up with its local characteristics: its physical features, its past and present history, its economic possibilities, the racial descent of its inhabitants. These all combine to determine the character of its legends and the peculiarities of its customs. The marked and striking features of Shropshire scenery lend themselves especially to the growth of *myths of origin*, not unparalleled elsewhere, but attracted to the spot by local conditions.

The Wrekin, the central point of the county, the *motif* of the county toast, "To all Friends round the Wrekin" (the rallying cry, as it might almost be called, of North and South), has been imagined to be the work of a baffled giant. He had a grievance against the people of Shrewsbury, and determined to revenge himself by damming up the Severn and drowning them out. So he set out from his Welsh home, carrying a spadeful of earth for the purpose; but the day grew hot, and he grew tired, and when he met a cobbler carrying a sack of old boots and shoes on his back, he asked how much farther he had to go. The cobbler, before answering the question, cautiously asked what he wanted at Shrewsbury, and on hearing his errand, replied, "Shrewsbury! *you'll* never get to Shrewsbury, neither to-day *nor* to-morrow. Why, look at me! *I've* just come from Shrewsbury, and I've worn out all these boots and shoes on the road." The weary giant in despair threw down his load, scraped his boots on his spade, and returned home, leaving the two heaps—the Wrekin and the little Ercall Hill beside it—as memorials of his baffled plans.

Another weary giant, no other than the Devil himself, tramped across the Stiperstones with his apron full of stones, and sat down to rest on the topmost crag; but as he rose again to go his way, his apron-string broke, and scattered the stones over the hillside all round the Devil's Chair.

There is another Giant's Chair on the Titterstone Clee; a Giant's Shaft (*i.e.*, arrow) on the Brown Clee; a Giant's Grave on Llanymynech Hill; while at View Edge and Norton Camp, two hills crowned with earthworks on either side of the river Onny, there lived two giants who kept their money in a chest in the vaults of Stokesay Castle, in the intervening valley. But they had only one key, which they threw backwards and forwards as they wanted it, till one day one of them threw it into the castle moat, whence it has never been recovered. But the treasure-chest stands in the vaults still, guarded by a raven perched on the top, who drives away all comers.

On Stapeley Hill, an outlier of Corndon, in the far west of the county, stands a prehistoric stone circle known as Mitchell's Fold. A "fold," in the speech of the country, means a farmyard; Mitchell, from A. S. *mycel*, M. E. *michel*=mickle or big: hence Mitchell's Fold=big yard or big man's yard. Here "*the*" giant used to milk his cow, according to the legend current so far back as the middle of the eighteenth century. She was a beautiful large white animal, and gave milk sufficient for all comers so long as each person only brought one vessel to be filled. At last there came a malicious old witch, who milked the poor cow into a riddle (*Anglice*, sieve), and exhausted the apparently unending supply. The cow, enraged by this treatment, fled madly into Warwickshire, where she became the celebrated Dun Cow of Warwick, and the poor people who had been used to depend on her milk were left to starve. "But the old witch was turned to stone, and the other stones were put up round her to keep her in, and they called it Mitchell's Fold, because her name was Mitchell." So the story ends nowadays, with a bit of folk-etymology. The giant has dropped out of it, but the earlier form of the story is evidently nearer the original.

An outstanding rock on the scarp of Wenlock Edge is the traditional home of a ghostly highwayman or robber chief, who was buried in his own cave by a fall of the cliff, together with his outlaw band and their hoard of treasure. The mark of his golden chain may be seen on the rock. If anyone stands on the top of the cliff and cries

Ippikin! Ippikin!
Keep away with your long chin!

Ippikin (or Hipperkin) will appear, still wearing his golden chain, and sweep the insulting speaker over the precipice, to be dashed to pieces by the fall.

The cave in Nesscliff Hill had a less mythical inhabitant, namely, Wild Humphrey Kynaston, a younger son of the Kynastons of Myddle Castle, who was outlawed apparently for murder, possibly for debt also, in 1491, and took refuge in this cave in the Marches beyond the reach of English law. Once when he had crossed the Severn the Sheriff's officers followed him, and removed some of the planks from Montford Bridge to cut off his escape; but he put his faithful horse to the leap and landed safely on the further side, where the King's writ did not run. The wonderful leap was long kept in memory by marks dug in the turf on Knockin Heath, and popular tradition now tells of "Kynaston's Leap" over the Severn, from Nesscliff Hill to Ellesmere, or even to the top of the Breidden Hill. The horse's hoof-mark is shown on the top of Nesscliff Hill, and the rider is said to have sold himself to the Devil. But Wild Humphrey remains in popular memory chiefly as the ideal outlaw who robbed the rich to give to the poor, who took off the leader from a team of three horses and hooked it on in front of a cart drawn by a single one; who asked for drink at a neighbouring hall, tossed off the ale at a draught, and rode away with the silver cup in his pocket; whose every want was supplied by the rich who feared him and the poor who loved him. His horse shares his fame. It grazed untethered freely on the open hillside, it came at his whistle, it was stabled with him in the cave at night, it was shod backwards that no one might track it; it was, in fine, a supernatural creature, even perhaps the Devil himself in the shape of a horse! It is rather characteristic of the ancient Marchland that our popular heroes should, for the most part, have been outlaws.

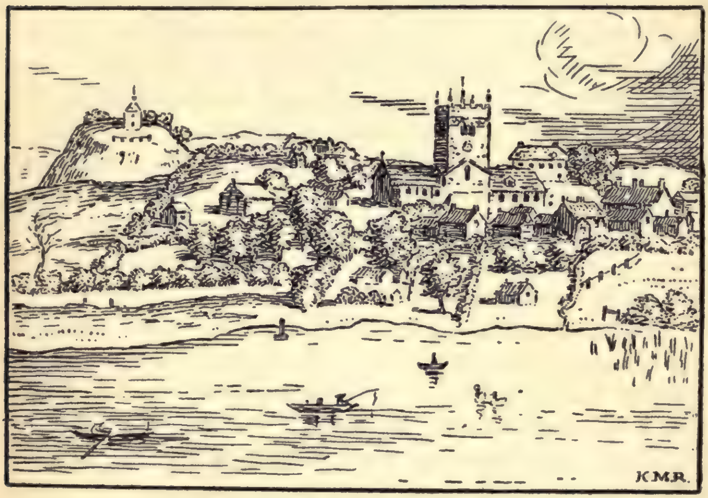
Robin Hood, the national outlaw-hero, had no connection with the county; nevertheless, a great arrow on the roof of what was once the Fletchers' Chantry in Ludlow Church is supposed to have been shot by him from "Robin Hood's Butts," a tumulus in the Old Field. The same name is given to some tumuli on the Longmynd, and some stones near West Felton were known as Robin Hood's Chair, though the memory of Fulk fitzWarin of Whittington, the thirteenth century outlaw, has died out of popular tradition.

Miners in long-worked mines often think they hear the *knockers* or the *old men* at work underground. The lead-miners of the Stiperstones identify these Old Men with the local Saxon champion, Wild Edric, and his followers, the last defenders of English freedom against the Norman invader, who live for ever in the depths of the hills. When war is about to break out, they appear, and may be seen riding over the hills. A strangely detailed account of such a vision before the Crimean War has been recorded, but, unfortunately, not at first-hand, and not till long afterwards. Except the famous case of the skeleton with golden armour found in a barrow at Mold, this is

WHITTINGTON CASTLE :

perhaps the oldest piece of oral historical tradition yet met with in England.

The lakes or "meres" of the North Shropshire plain have their myths of origin and their supernatural inhabitants as well as the hills. Generally they are said to be bottomless; under many of them church bells may be heard ringing. Sometimes these are said to have been thrown there by wicked hands, and the story is told at Colemere and the Berth Pool, Baschurch, that attempts were made to recover them, but that when the oxen brought for the purpose had nearly succeeded in dragging them out, some bystander uttered an oath, on which the ropes broke and the bells fell back into the water. In other places (Bomere Pool and Llynclys) the bells are the relics of a city swallowed by a flood, by which the mere was formed. Ellesmere, the largest and perhaps the most beautiful of the meres, was caused by the avarice of an old woman,[1] who locked up her well to prevent her neighbours



ELLESMERE.

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[1] Otherwise, of a churlish farmer.

taking the water. It bubbled up and overflowed till it drowned her cottage and land and formed the mere. Ellesmere still has a ghostly inhabitant, the White Lady of Oteley, who haunted a room in old Oteley House, on the very margin of the water, so incessantly, that when the house was pulled down (about 1830) and re-erected on a fresh site, a portion of it was left standing as a home for the ghost, which otherwise might have "flitted" with the stones. A paved causeway, traceable far under the mere, is still known as the Lady's Walk. The Black Pool, a "bottomless" pond close to the road between Longnor and Leebotwood, is the abode of another White Lady, who sometimes issued from it at night and wandered about the roads, and even on one occasion joined in the dancing in a neighbouring public-house garden. Her sudden disappearance betrayed her nature, and the party broke up terrified, nor did they venture to dance there again. Yet another White Lady haunts the Dark Walk beside the pool in the grounds at Kilsall.

In some places the fair dweller in the waters is known as a mermaid (=mere-maid ?). The Mermaid of Newport lives in Aqualate Mere, two miles higher up the Wildmoors than the site of the town. If she really deserves her name she must once have inhabited the Vivary pool below the mere, from which the burgesses of Newport were bound to supply fish for the king's table, but which seems gradually to have dried up during the eighteenth century. (Its place is now occupied by the Shropshire Union Canal.) When Aqualate Mere was being dredged and cleansed, the mermaid put her head out and gave this warning:

> If this mere you do let dry:
> Newport and Meretown I will destr'y.

Another mermaid lives, or lived, in a pond at Child's Ercall. She appeared once to two men on their way to their work, and offered them treasures if they would come to her in the water to receive them. But just as she was about to put a lump of gold into their hands one of them uttered an oath, and the mermaid vanished with a shriek.[1]

Pools of stagnant water are sometimes said to be the abode of "Jenny Greenteeth," who will drag in unwary children who venture too near the edge.

Bomere Pool is the residence of a monster fish, girt with a sword, which, one story says, was buckled round him by the Squire of Condover when he was once captured by a fishing party, from whose boat he easily escaped. Another and more romantic version declares that this is no other than Wild Edric's sword (thrown like Excalibar into the pool?) committed to the fish's keeping when he vanished, and never to be restored till the "right heir" to Condover Hall (or to Edric's estates) shall come to claim his own.

"Sivern," the great river which cleaves the county in halves, is always mentioned without the prefix "the," as if it were a person. If anyone should drown his enemy in the river, he must never again attempt to cross it, for the river will avenge the murder, stretching out long arms and dragging him under. And the river water is so instinct with life that if any be taken into a house it will keep up a perpetual drumming against the sides of the vessel containing it until it be restored to its home. If Milton (*Comus*) may be believed, it was formerly thought to be a remedy for witchcraft in cattle, and Dyer's *Fleece* echoes and elaborates his description of the "shepherds" throwing offerings of flowers into the stream at sheep-shearings and festivals.

A country of hills and rivers is naturally also a country of wells and springs. Saints' wells are found everywhere, most of them healing wells; though healing properties are not confined to wells of saintly dedication. Wishing wells occur occasionally in the west of the county. At that in Sunny Gutter, near Ludlow (the traditional scene of the adventure in *Comus*), you must drop a stone into the water when you wish; at the famous well of St. Oswald, Oswestry, stone rites are also practised. You may either take a little water up in your hand, drink part, and throw the rest on a stone in the masonry carved with the head of St. Oswald; or throw a stone on a certain spot at the bottom of the well, and put your head under the jet of water thrown up; or breathe your wish into a hole in the keystone of the arch over the well; or simply bathe your face with the water. At Rhosgoch-by-Worthen (not strictly in Shropshire) pins must be offered; so also at the wells at Rorrington and Churchstoke, where wishing is not mentioned, pins were thrown into the wells at the Well-Wakes on Ascension Day.[1]

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[1] Compare the oath which prevents the rescue of the church bells from the water, and the Shropshire proverb, "Don't swear, or you'll catch no fish." Swearing also prevents bees from swarming.

Wakes are a noteworthy feature of Shropshire folk-lore. A wake is an annual local merrymaking or festival, known in some counties as a "feast," and usually observed on the day of the saint to whom the parish church is dedicated. Absent members of families came home for the wake, special local cakes or other viands were generally provided, sports, usually trials of strength or skill, were got up among the young men, different places having each its own speciality in this way; dancing, "kiss-in-the-ring," and other games went on, mummers or morris-dancers came round. Such was the wake of old times. Shows, "merry-go-rounds," and dancing in the public-houses form the staple of the amusements nowadays.

But besides the parochial wakes, we find in Shropshire similar wakes observed at well sides in early summer, or on hill tops, generally beside a spring. No such wakes were held on the banks of the meres: it is evident that for some reason *living* water was a necessity of the festival. In three cases which have been recorded—

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[1] Mr. G. L. Gomme, in his *Ethnology and Folk-Lore*, pp. 81, 82, takes some of these places to be in the *east* of the county, which, as he bases some of his conclusions on their position, is unfortunate.

Rorrington, Old Churchstoke, and Betchcot on the Longmynd—the well was "dressed" with boughs and flowers as in the well-known case of Tissington, in Derbyshire. At the "Halliwell Wakes," held on Ascension Day at the Halliwell or Holy Well on the hillside at Rorrington Green (a hamlet in the parish of Chirbury), a bower of rushes, boughs, and flowers was erected over the well, and a maypole set up. The people "walked" (*i.e.*, went in procession) round the hill, led by music, dancing as they went. The well was visited, the water tasted, and pins thrown into it to bring good-luck and preserve the donors from witchcraft. A barrel of ale, brewed the previous autumn on the green (presumably from the Holy Well water), was taken to the well side and tapped. Cakes were also sold, round, flat spiced buns, marked with a cross, which were supposed to bring good luck if kept. The rest of the day was spent in feasting and dancing at the well side. Elsewhere in West Shropshire we hear of the people sitting round the well eating cakes and drinking sugar-and-water from cups passed round the circle. We seem almost to be carried back to the eighth century, when Archbishop Egbert ordained that "if any man keep his wake at a well, let him fast three years!"

In some cases, as we have seen, the well has received a saintly dedication; sometimes there is a tradition of an ancient chapel having stood beside it, or else the day chosen is a Church festival, such as Palm Sunday or Ascension Day; but even this thin veneer of Christianity is often wanting in the Hill Wakes which were held on several of the principal heights.

It was customary to ascend Pontesford Hill on Palm Sunday, professedly to search for a mysterious *golden arrow*, dropped by a king, or a fairy, or in a battle (as it was variously reported) on the hill years ago, and only to be recovered by the destined heir to the estate, or by the maiden seventh daughter of a seventh son searching for it at midnight; but on its discovery some great estate would be restored to the true heir, or some unknown spell be removed. The custom, however, was called "going palming," and the practice was to try to be the first to gather a spray from a solitary yew-tree on the summit, known as the haunted yew-tree, which "palm" would prove a talisman against every kind of misfortune during the next twelve months; and after that to run headlong down the steep slope of the hill and dip the fourth finger of the right (left ?) hand in the waters of Lyde Hole, a reputed "bottomless" pool of the brook in the valley, after which the next person of the opposite sex to be met would be the destined husband or wife of the diviner.

Wrekin Wakes, held on the first Sunday in May, were distinguished by an ever-recurring contest between the colliers and the agricultural population for the possession of the hill. This is said to have gone on all day, reinforcements being called up when either side was worsted. The rites still practised by visitors to the Wrekin doubtless formed part of the ceremonial of the ancient wake. On the bare rock at the summit is a natural hollow, known as the Raven's Bowl or the Cuckoo's Cup, which is always full of water, supposed to be placed there as it were miraculously, for the use of the birds. Every visitor should taste this water, and, if a young girl ascending the hill for the first time, should then scramble down the steep face of the cliff and squeeze through a natural cleft in the rock called the Needle's Eye, and believed to have been formed when the rocks were rent at the Crucifixion. Should she look back during the task, she will never be married. Her lover should await her at the further side of the gap, where he may claim a kiss, or, in default of one, the forfeit of some article of clothing—a coloured article, such as a glove, a kerchief, or a ribbon, carefully explained the lady on whose authority the last detail is given.

Of Caradoc Wakes, held on Trinity Sunday (*i.e.*, at the end of the Whitsuntide holidays?) no very special features have been recorded. The chief event was a wrestling match for a pair of leathern hedging gloves. The cave known to all as "Caractus's Hole" was visited; and pursuing cakes rolled down the steep brow of the hill was another amusement. A barrel of beer was carted up the hill, old women offered gingerbread for sale, and the unfailing spring within the area of the ancient camp supplied water for making tea, which in the early nineteenth century was, it must be remembered, a luxury.

The Titterstone Wake, unlike the others, was not held till the last Sunday in August—the end of harvest.[1] It was customary there for the young men and young women to ascend the hill in separate parties, going by different routes and meeting at a recognised trysting-place, whence they proceeded to a spot known as Tea-kettle Alley, sheltered by tall blocks of basalt, where the elder women made tea with the water of the adjoining spring. Then the boys climbed the Giant's Chair, and sat repeating a ditty which, alas! cannot be recovered, but which probably conveyed a challenge or defiance. Fights and similar contests were, as has been said, favourite features of the old-fashioned wakes, and we often meet with some ceremony of challenging all comers for the championship. Moreover, there was reported to have been a *battle of giants* (battle = single combat) on the Titterstone.

The sort of water-cult which pervades all these festivals will not escape any reader. It appears again, and in connection with a contest, in the curious custom of Rope-pulling, observed at Ludlow every Shrovetide up to 1850. A large rope of prescribed length and thickness, with a red knob at one end and a blue one at the other, was bought by the Corporation and given by the Mayor from a window in the Town Hall to the townspeople in the street. The inhabitants of Broad Street Ward seized the red knob, those of Corve Street the blue, and a fierce tug-of-war through the streets ensued, which was concluded when either the Broad Street men could dip their knob into the River Teme or the Corve Street men drag their opponents into the Bull Ring. This was repeated twice or three times, and the winners of two pullings became owners of the rope, which was then sold, and the proceeds spent in beer for their refreshment. This must originally have been a rain-charm, as in Burmah, or a weather-divination—drought *versus* floods—for the coming season.

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[1] *Cf.* Professor Rhys, *Celtic Folk-Lore.*

The popular annual festival of Much Wenlock was carried on independently of the local authorities. The municipality there has succeeded to the ancient jurisdiction of the Priory over the whole of Wenlock Liberty—some seventeen parishes in the heart of the county. On Ascension Day the young men and boys of the town used to choose a mock Bailiff, who was solemnly arrayed in a hair-cloth gown, a Recorder, Town Clerk, Crier, etc., and to ride about the Liberty calling at the various gentlemen's houses for refreshment. At the end of the day they assembled outside the Guildhall, by the pillory, and their Town Clerk read their "Charter," as they called it, a rhyming doggrel of which only two lines have been preserved:

> We go from Beckbury and Badger to Stoke on the Clee,
> To Monk Hopton, Round Acton, and so return we.

The custom hardly survived into the nineteenth century. It probably originated whenever the lawful authorities ceased to "beat the bounds" of the Liberty themselves.

"Shrewsbury Show," the great annual gala of Shrewsbury, which lasted, with some vicissitudes, down to 1878, was the direct descendant of the Corpus Christi Guild-procession of the Middle Ages.[1] It was, of course, under

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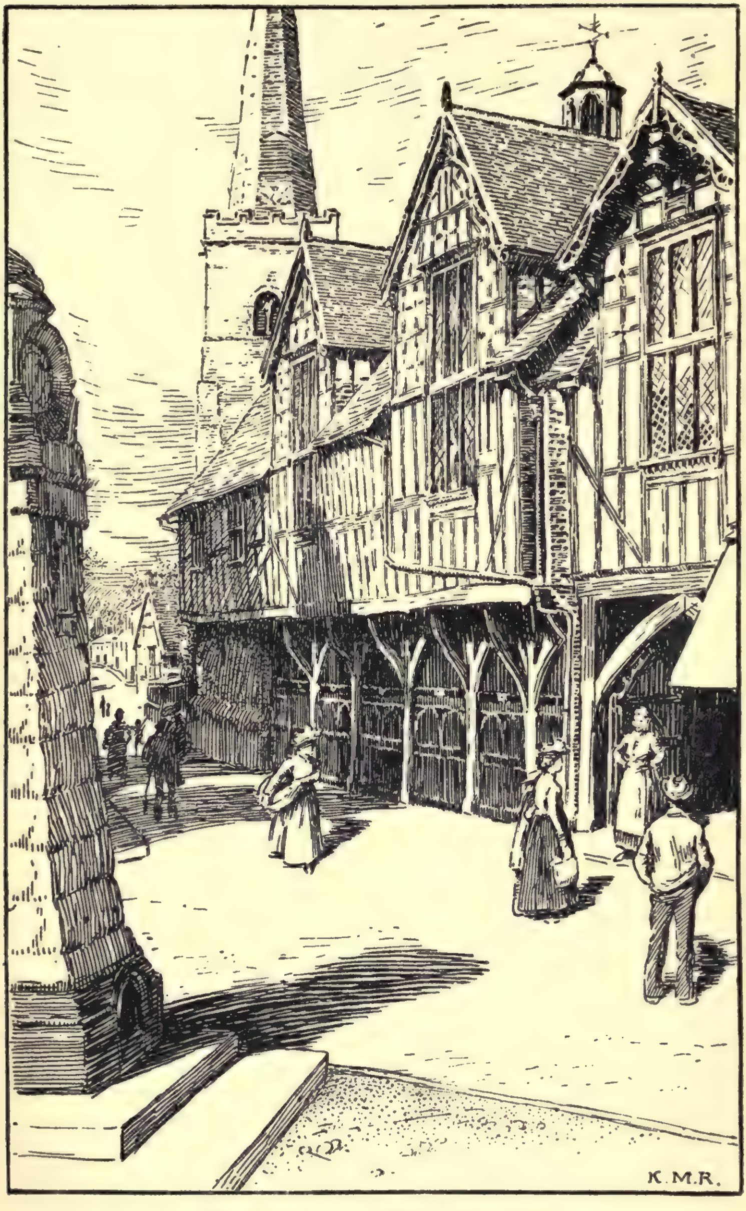
[1] Corpus Christi, the Thursday after Trinity Sunday.



THE GUILDHALL, MUCH WENLOCK.

the management of the trading companies, each of whom provided a "pageant" for the procession. This might be either a scene in action, paraded on a portable platform or a waggon, or one or more characters in costume riding singly on horseback. Each trade had also a banner, and frequently a band. Behind these the master tradesmen of the craft walked in procession, followed by their apprentices, who sometimes provided separate pageants of their own. There is no record or tradition of the performance of any mystery-plays, as at York, Coventry, and Chester. If plays there were, they probably consisted not of a connected mystery, but of single miracle-plays on the legends of the patron saints of the companies. Even to the last days of the show, the shoemakers' pageant represented St. Crispin and St. Crispian. The shearmen or cloth-dressers exhibited St. Blaize; the barbers evidently once displayed St. Katharine, though from the time of Catherine of Braganza she became *Queen* Catherine, and her wheel a spinning-wheel; while the stag and huntsmen contributed by the glovers looks like a reminiscence of the legend of St. Giles, in whose parish in the Foregate they chiefly dwelt.

The pageants of the other companies are of more obscure origin, and moreover varied from time to time; often quaintly enough, as when the "Black Prince" was represented as a negro! Possibly, however, the blackamoor may be the oldest part of the affair, and the name "Black Prince" may have been attached to him later.[1] So also Venus, Ceres, and Mother Eve may be remnants of a primitive "Lady Godiva" element in the show, with all its shadowy background of magic.[2]

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[1] *Cf.* Hartland, *Science of Fairy Tales*, p. 85. A negro "Black Prince" is a constant character in the Mummers' Play.

[2] The Barbers, who carried "Queen" Catherine, were the oldest of the companies, having been incorporated in 1306. The Bakers were associated with them, and when separated again, either kept St. Catherine or presented Venus or Ceres; while the Barbers, temporarily deprived of their patroness, adopted Queen Elizabeth in her place, always keeping up the tradition of a *female* figure. The Tailors, who

In the palmy days of the show the procession was headed by the Mayor and Corporation, after whom came the trades in due order, accompanied by musicians playing the lively country-dance tune known as *Shrewsbury Quarry.* They went through the town and (since 1595) out to Kingsland, which, till the time of the present generation, was an open space beyond the river.[1] Here each trade had its own "Arbour," a permanent structure containing dining-hall, buttery, and other offices, duly furnished with long tables and benches, with a chair at the upper end for the Warden of the Company. There they dined, entertaining the Corporation as their guests, and spent the afternoon in amusement. The handsome gateway of one of these arbours still remains, re-erected in the Quarry, and running the "Shoemakers' Race" formed one of the customary sports. It no longer exists, but it was a sort of labyrinth cut in the turf, measuring exactly a mile; and in the midst was a rude representation of a giant's face, on to which the runner had to jump, alighting with his feet upon the eyes.

Whether plays were given at the Show or not, they were favourite diversions at other festivals. The open-air theatre may yet be traced in the Quarry, where miracle-plays were acted by the Abbot of Shrewsbury's men, and where, when the abbey was swept away, were performed dramas, composed and superintended by the Master of the

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were incorporated so early as 1460, and who disputed with the Shoemakers the right to lead the way, carried a "gyrle" as their pageant in the earliest show of which we have details. Later they depicted Adam and Eve on their banner, and as a pageant exhibited Cupid. Female nudity forms an important element in the ceremonial of rain-charms in the East and elsewhere. *Cf.* Hartland, *Science of Fairy Tales*, p. 71.

[1] Till about 1594 the trades seem to have met in the Quarry, but in that year an order was made by the Corporation forbidding plays, games, etc., "within the Town and Liberties." Kingsland was an open common where the burgesses had rights of pasture, as they had in the Quarry, but it was in the parish of Meole and diocese of Hereford. Probably the division between the Sees of Lichfield and Hereford perpetuated the memory of a much older time of division, either of Saxon kingdoms or still earlier tribes, and so Kingsland was beyond the jurisdiction of the town authorities.

School. Drama under Elizabethan conditions survived in one remote corner of the county almost within the memory of man. On the western border, plays dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were acted in the thirties and forties of the nineteenth by companies of village men. They were performed at the wakes on an open-air stage formed of waggons boarded over. The chairman, book in hand, sat on the stage in full view of the audience, acting as prompter and call-boy in one; boys took the women's parts, and the fool "played all manner of meagrims," and was "going on with his manœuvres all the time."[1] "*Stage*-plays" they were called, in contradistinction to the performance of the Guisers (more generally known as Mummers), who perambulate the country at festival seasons (in Shropshire at Christmas), and entering the farm kitchens without ceremony, there act their play on the floor of the room in the midst of the spectators. The play is, on the surface, the story of St. George, the champion of England, who overthrows all comers who dare to cross swords with him; but the real *motif* is the far older one of the death of a hero in single combat and his revival at the hands of a wonder-working-magician.[2] It must not be confounded with the morris-dance, in which there is no play, no fight, and no "disguising," or dressing in character. It consists of a sort of country-dance, with various and often elaborate figures, danced by pairs of men brandishing short staves, and dressed in uniform costume with ribbons and (properly speaking) bells. Like all such old shows, it was accompanied by a Fool, and often by a man in woman's clothes, but these were not among the dancers. In the Middle Ages, and even much later, most municipal towns appear to have kept a troop of morris-dancers, who turned out to accompany any civic procession or gala, but in modern times the great stronghold of morris-dancing seems to be the Cotswold Hills. In Shropshire it seems chiefly to be practised in the south, the south-east, and the colliery districts, while we hear more of the Guisers in the north-east.

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[1] Sir Offley Wakeman in *Shropshire Archæological Transactions*, vol. vii., p. 383.

[2] Much learning has been expended on this mythological theme, but no full examination of the popular drama itself, its probable source, and the area in which it is known, has yet appeared.

There is, in fact, considerable diversity of custom in the county. South and West of the Severn, Mothering Sunday (the fourth Sunday in Lent) is frequently observed by visits paid to the mothers by their children living away from home. It is called also "Simnel Sunday," from the cakes presented by the dutiful visitors. Shrewsbury still has a speciality for its Simnel Cakes—rich plum cakes, round and flat, with a peculiar scalloped edging, which are enclosed in a hard crust coloured with saffron, and are boiled before being baked. The name comes from *siminella*, fine flour; but folk-etymology derives it from an imaginary old couple named *Sim* and *Nell*, who disputed whether to boil or bake the remains of their Christmas pudding, and finally agreed to do both. But in the north-eastern portion of the county Mothering Sunday is never heard of. On the other hand, All Souls' Eve (Hallow E'en) is commonly observed there. Parties of children (formerly of adults also) go from door to door singing, or rather droning, a rhyming ditty,[1] and begging for apples, beer, or the "soul-cakes" which in days still remembered, good housewives used to bake in readiness for them. The object of the practice obviously was to provide the poor with materials for keeping the festival with cakes and wassail, while they no doubt (in mediæval times) would remember their benefactors and their benefactors' deceased friends at the Mass for All Souls the next morning. The curious thing is that, save at Pulverbatch, there is no record of this custom south of the Severn.

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[1] Shakespeare had heard them. "He speaks puling, like a beggar at Hallowmas."—*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act ii., sc. i.

There seems, in fact, to be a boundary-line of custom running transversely across the county from south-east to north-west, following to some extent the course of the Severn. South and west of this line the yearly hiring of servants takes place in May; north and east of it, at Christmas; which really amounts to a difference in the calendar in use among the agricultural population in the two districts. The line, moreover, coincides somewhat closely with a philological boundary, viz., that between the Northern and Western types of dialect, which is traceable through the county; and, more roughly, with the oldest political boundary of the region, namely, that which divides the diocese of Lichfield from those of St. Asaph and Hereford. (The latter, founded A.D. 676, served the ancient sub-kingdom of the Hecanas or Magesætas.) This looks as if it might really have a racial origin. But as all the historic races—Celt, Teuton, and Norseman—which have contributed to people our island, divided the year into winter and summer—November-May, May-November,—and began it at the beginning of a season, and not at the winter solstice or any of the quarter-days dependent on it, like the Roman and Ecclesiastical calendars,[1] the difference is perhaps on the whole more likely to be due to local political causes.

Shropshire people are always ready for "a bit of a do;" not a swindle, be it understood, but a merrymaking. Not contented with the authorised calendrical feasts they seize on every opportunity to show their kindly feeling by popular festivities. The marriage of an important landowner, or the birth or majority of an heir to his estates, for example, is always an occasion for sympathetic rejoicing. Subscriptions are raised to feast the poor and to provide amusements for a gala. An ox, or more than one, is purchased and killed for distribution among the cottagers. On the appointed day the village is decorated with flags and arches; a grand procession is formed of the subscribers, tenantry, schools, and so forth, with bands, flags, and decorated waggons conveying the oxen, to visit and congratulate the gentleman in whose honour the affair is arranged. The feasting probably takes place in his park, and the rest of the day is spent in games and amusements. Whether the local folk-lore of Shropshire bears witness to the ethnic descent of the people or not, it will be seen that it certainly reflects their cheerful, sociable, friendly character. These were the qualities which in the sixteenth century already distinguished them among other counties.

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[1] Tille, *Yule and Christmas, their place in the Germanic Year;* Rhys *Celtic Folk-lore, Welsh and Manx,* i. 315.

> And Shropshire saith in her, That shins be ever sharp,
> Lay wood upon the fire, reach hither me my harp,
> And whilst the black bowl walks, we merrily will carp.
>
> Drayton *Polyolbion*, 23.

C. S. BURNE.

LUDLOW AND THE COUNCIL OF THE MARCHES

By Caroline A. J. Skeel, D.Litt., F.R.Hist.S.

Author of *The Council in the Marches of Wales*

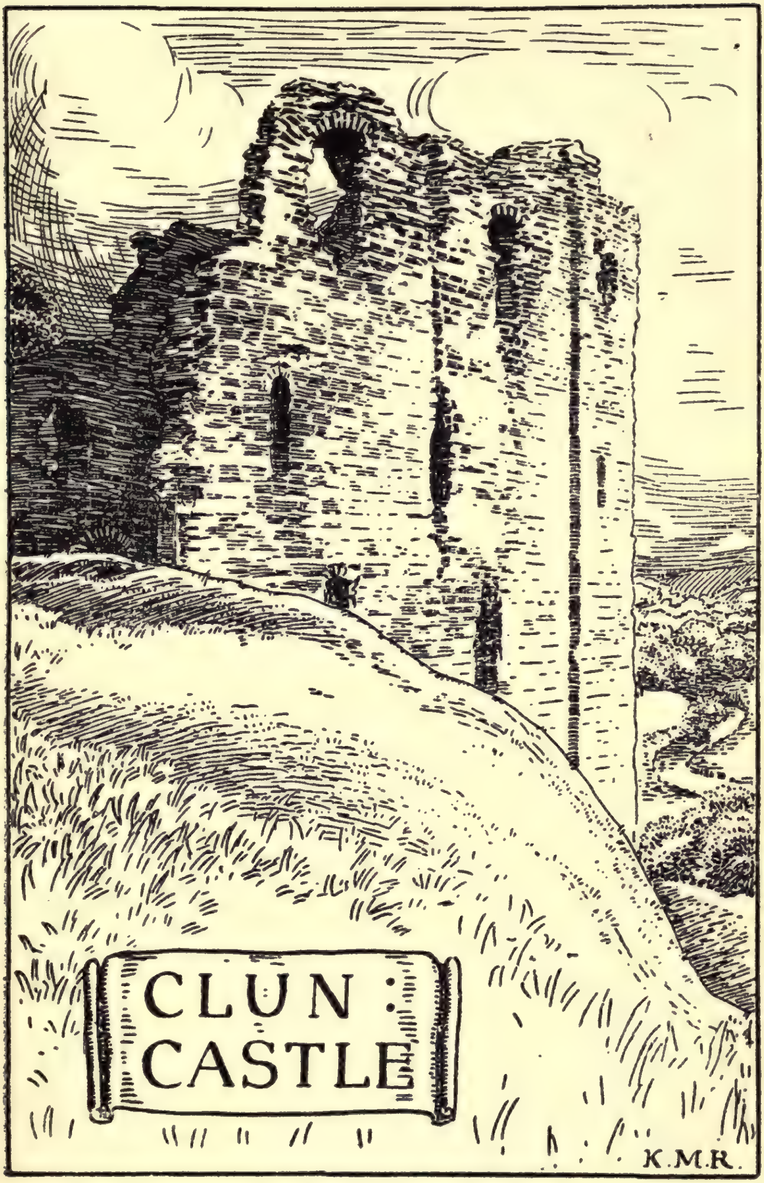
Thus farre I goe to prove this Wales in dede
Or els at least, the martchers of the same.
But further speake of shiere it is no neede,
Save Ludloe now, a towne of noble fame:
A goodly seate, where oft the councell lyes,
Where monuments are found in auncient guyse:
Where kings and queenes in pompe did long abyde,
And where God pleasde that good Prince Arthur dyde.

Churchyard.—Worthines of Wales.

FEW of the smaller towns of England are so full of memories as Ludlow, "town of noble fame," and in few places can the connexion between the present and the past be more fully realized. The castle still crowns the hill that overlooks the meeting of the Teme and Corve; the tower of St. Lawrence's Church is a landmark as it was four centuries ago, but there is no clash of arms in the narrow streets, no eager throng watching from afar the coming of prince or president, little save memories to remind us of the days when Ludlow was the capital of the Marches and the seat of a vice-regal court. Yet such memories grow strangely vivid as we walk along the streets once trodden by Prince Edward and Princess Mary, or enter the castle which was the home of Lacys and Mortimers, Sydneys and Herberts, or look at the windows from which "the verse of Comus was first shaken into the air of England."

The greatest days of Ludlow were from the fifteenth century down to the revolution of 1688, when it was the most usual meeting-place of the Council in the Marches of Wales. But long before the establishment of the Council Ludlow had been the chief seat of the Mortimer power: there Richard Duke of York had mustered the army which melted away in the rout of Ludford Bridge, and during the reigns of the Yorkist Kings the town enjoyed special favour. In the reign of Edward IV. the Council in the Marches arose out of the Prince's Council, which had existed ever since the time of the first English Prince of Wales for the purpose of administering his estates. Edward, as heir of the Mortimers and the chief Marcher Lord, well knew the need of strong government in the Welsh Border, which had been for centuries one of the most disorderly parts of the kingdom. Hence, in the year 1473, in all probability, a Council was appointed with large administrative powers under the presidency of John Alcock, Bishop of Ely. Prince Edward, who was but three years old, had already been sent down to the Border with his mother, and it would seem that Ludlow was his home till his accession in 1483. During these ten years the Council made a beginning in the work of reducing the Marches to order, but on the departure of Edward V. from Ludlow it seems to have fallen into abeyance, and no record occurs of it till the reign of Henry VII., who, as a Welshman, and owing his crown largely to Welsh help, was naturally anxious to improve the condition of Wales and the Marches.

Under Henry VII. the Council of the Marches was definitely established. Probably about 1493 a Council was appointed for Prince Arthur, who spent much of his brief life at Ludlow, whence he often visited Shrewsbury to receive entertainment from the burgesses. A letter from the Council to the bailiffs of Shrewsbury probably belongs to this period; it is headed, "By the Prince," and concludes with the formula used in the Council's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letters, "Given under our Signet at the Castle of Ludlow the vth day of December." The Prince's stay in the Marches has been commemorated ever since by the name of "Prince Arthur," which is attached to the room at the western extremity of the group of main buildings in the inner court. A strange fatality attended all those of royal blood who dwelt at Ludlow Castle. Edward V. had left it, only to find a prison and a grave; Prince Arthur, on whom so many hopes had been fixed, died there but five months after his wedding day. After the Prince's death, in 1502, Bishop Smyth, founder of Brasenose College, acted as President up to 1512, and during these years may be placed the transition from the Prince's Council to the Council in the Marches of Wales. Little record of its work survives, but we may gather that it was empowered to punish rebellions and murders, and to array the "fencible men" in time of need.

After several years of obscurity, the Council of the Marches once more came into prominence in the year 1525, when the Princess Mary, not yet ten years of age, was sent to the Border to keep Court there with the Bishop of Exeter, John Voysey, as President. Elaborate instructions were drawn up for the regulation of her household, and chapel furniture, damask, velvet and cloth were sent down from London in readiness for her arrival. In September, 1525, she paid a visit to her father at King's Langley, probably to bid him farewell. One of Wolsey's correspondents tells him: "My lady princess came hither on Saturday, surely, sir, of her age as goodly a child as ever I have seen, and of as good gesture and countenance. . . . Her Grace was not only well accompanied with a goodly number, but also with divers persons of gravity, *venerandam habendam canitiem.* I saw not the court, sir, better furnished with sage personages many days than now." The little Princess stayed in the Marches for some eighteen months, partly at Ludlow, partly at Thornbury, and at Tickenhill, near Bewdley. A letter addressed by six of her Council to Wolsey speaks of the great repair of strangers expected at the coming Christmastide (1525 or 1526), and asks his pleasure respecting Christmas entertainments—Lord of Misrule, interludes, and the like—and also about New Year's gifts for the King and Queen, Wolsey himself, and the Queen of France. All through 1526 negotiations were proceeding for Mary's marriage to Francis I. or his second son, the Duke of Orleans, and in the spring of 1527 she was summoned from Ludlow to meet the French Commissioners at Greenwich. Her household in the Marches was reduced, partly by the easy process of requesting certain abbots to take so many of the destitute servants unto "convenient finding." Meanwhile, Wales and the Marches remained in an unsatisfactory condition; the Lord President, as a spiritual person, could not inflict the death penalty for felony and murder, and Cromwell was compelled to note in his *Remembrances* again and again: "The necessity of looking into the state of Wales." "More than a hundred," he was told, "have been slain in the Marches of Wales since the Bishop of Exeter was President there, and not one of them punished."

At last the Presidency of the Council was given to a man whose strong hand repressed the lawlessness which from time immemorial had prevailed in the Marches. Rowland Lee, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, held office from 1534 to 1543, during which period we have, from his own correspondence with Cromwell, a vivid picture of the Council's work. His task was not easy. First and foremost, he had to punish manslaughter and thievery, then to suppress riots, and to check the misdeeds of royal and manorial officials and the prevalence of perjury on the part of juries. Soon his exertions bore fruit, and he could write triumphantly to Cromwell: "I hope you understand the good order begun in Wales so that thieves are afraid." Thieves were his special bugbear. He writes with much indignation that at a certain cattle sale, Richard Lloyd, of Welshpool, "a gentleman and a thief and a receiver of thieves," wore a doublet of crimson velvet or satin, "which does not become a thief; the hanging of one such would cause forty to beware." And again: "Good rule prevails here, for one cow keeps another, which was never before. . . . The thieves have hanged me in imagination, I trust to be even with them shortly."

Lee's hope was certainly fulfilled, for by 1538 he could write:

> Wales was never in better order, all old factions forgotten . . . Your subjects in Wales be in such order that since Christmas I hear of neither stealing, riots, murders, nor manslaughters. In the Marches and in Wales in the wild parts where I have been is order and quiet such as is now in England.

Ludlow is mentioned several times in his letters. He complains that in the Castle there was

> Neither gun nor powder, only one hundred sheaf of arrows and forty bows little worth; not one string nor axe whereby I could do the King service, two hundred and fifty Almain rivets, but neither gorget nor apron of mail. Thank God the country is quiet.

The Castle itself was out of repair, and Lee resorted to curious expedients to secure the necessary money. He asked Cromwell if he might use the goods of a certain murderer, valued at £40 or £50 only, out of which something must be deducted for the relief of the widow and children.

During Lee's presidency were passed the acts by which the union of England and Wales was effected, and the powers of the President and Council of the Marches confirmed. Lee disapproved of the "shiring of Wales," and drew a dismal picture of the "bearing of thieves" that would ensue. Nevertheless, he set to work with his usual energy to carry out the necessary changes. He was equally ready to carry out the King's will in matters ecclesiastical. As he frankly confessed, he had "never heretofore been in pulpit," but he proceeded with his wonted businesslike thoroughness to carry out the King's injunctions as to preaching. Lee was undoubtedly the sternest and most effective of all the Lords President who kept court at Ludlow. Month after month he scoured Wales and the Marches, securing thieves in such numbers that neither Ludlow nor other castles were able to hold them all in security. For many years to come the Welsh trembled at the remembrance of "Bishop Rowland's justice," and the Shrewsbury chronicler a century later wrote that he "had brought Wales into civility before he died, and had said he would make the white sheep keep the black."

For several years after Lee's death little is known of the Council of the Marches beyond the names of the Lords President. But in 1559 began the tenure of office by one who left a mark both on Ludlow itself and on the character of the people within his jurisdiction—Sir Henry Sydney, father of Sir Philip, and one of the ablest and worthiest among Elizabethan statesmen. The spirit in which he governed may be best comprehended from his own words, written towards the close of his life:

> Great it is that in some sort I govern the third part of this realm under her most excellent Majesty; high it is, for by that I have precedence of great personages and by far my betters; happy it is for the goodness of the people whom I govern; and most happy it is for the commodity I have, by the authority of that place, to do good every day.

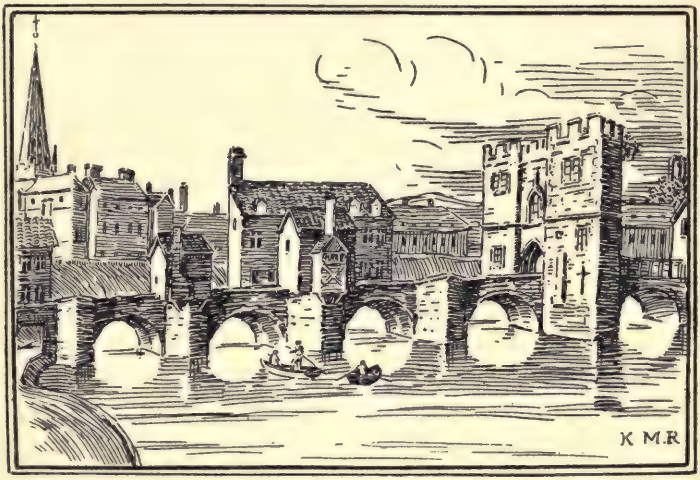
Sydney was Lord President from 1559 to 1586, but many of these years were spent in the weary task of crushing Irish rebellion. His visits to Ludlow were paid between the years 1559 and 1565, 1571 and 1575, and again between 1578 and his death in 1586. His famous children, Philip and Mary, spent most of their childhood in the Castle. There the little Ambrozia Sydney died, and her monument may still be seen on the right hand of the altar in St. Lawrence's Church. No more fitting home, surely, could have been chosen for the childhood of Philip, whose friendship became to Fulk Greville the most precious gift of life, and of Mary "the ornament of all womenkind."

Sydney's term of office has left abundant records of the work accomplished by the Council, partly in the detailed instructions issued at various times, and partly in the correspondence between the Privy Council and the Lord President or his deputy. The duties of the Council were mainly, as hitherto, the keeping of order and the punishment of offenders, the prevention of the wearing of armour without leave in fairs, markets and churches, and the suppression of the practice of livery, which lasted longer in Wales and the North than elsewhere. Numerous details are extant as to the officers of the Council and the fees allowed; we have even information as to the meals supplied to prisoners in the Porter's Lodge. The Porter was to keep in readiness two tables, the first and best at 8d. a meal, and the second at 6d. The prisoner was to choose at his commitment at which of these tables he would remain; if he refused to pay his fees on the day following his commitment and the ordinary diet charges every week-end, bonds were to be taken for due payment. Sydney did much to render the castle a more fitting seat of the Council's jurisdiction. He erected a range of buildings opposite the Chapel on the south side of the court. These included sundry offices, a bridge into the castle, a courthouse, and two offices underneath for keeping the Council records. Besides these he repaired the chapel, ceiled, glazed, and tiled it, with "fair and large windows," and adorned it with the arms of the Queen, sundry noblemen, and all the Lords President and Councillors. Even this list does not exhaust Sydney's improvements, for we read of the "wainscoting and flooring of a great parlour within the castle," "a fair tennis court within the same castle paved with freestone," and a conduit of lead more than a mile in length to convey water to the castle. Churchyard, too, tells us that at the end of the dining-chamber Sydney set a memorial of his return to the Marches, "a pretty device how the hedgehog brake the chain and came from Ireland to Ludlow." These buildings were probably finished about 1581, for in that year the following inscription was put up over the entrance to the inner court of the Castle, where it still remains:—

> Hominibus ingratis loquimini lapides
> Anno regni Reginæ Elizabethæ 23
> The 22 Year Complet of the Presidency
> of Sir Henry Sydney
> Knight of the Most Noble Order of
> The Garter, etc. 1581.

Sydney had had some experience of man's ingratitude. Towards the end of his life he had fallen out of favour with the Queen, and had been censured for laxity in carrying out the instructions concerning recusants; perhaps the supervision of the castle buildings may have solaced him in those years when health and strength had departed, and honour and gratitude came in scanty measure.

During Sydney's long absence in Ireland many abuses crept into the Council. Frequent complaints occur of corruption, partiality, greed, delay and extravagance. William Gerard, a member of the Council for over twenty years, told Walsingham that the "house" at Ludlow was one thousand marks in debt, and that the Porter's Lodge "is grown to no terror of punishment of the body, but a gulf through fees to suck up a mean man." He is frankness itself in his description of his colleagues; Sir Andrew Corbet, the Vice-President, was "a very sickly man, not able to take the toil of that service." Powell of Oswestry, was "well seen in Welsh stories, in that service sitteth like a cipher." Jerome Corbet was "a young man, an utter barrister in court, but so slow of despatch as not meet for that court." Nor was his colleague Fabian Phillips much more competent, for he was but "a young man, an utter barrister of small experience at the bar or bench, of no known living saving a bailiwick or stewardship." If abuses prevailed in the Council, it was not for lack of reforming zeal in some quarters. In the *Lansdowne MSS.* we can read page after page of complaints and commands, which for the most part had little effect. For two years, however, from 1577 to 1579, Sydney had an able deputy in Whitgift, then Bishop of Worcester, who acted as Vice-President with signal success, and received the thanks of the Privy Council for his services.



From an] [*Old Engraving.*
ENGLISH BRIDGE, SHREWSBURY.

On Sydney's death and the appointment of his successor, the Earl of Pembroke, a great effort was made to reform the Council. Pembroke set to work to become acquainted with its actual condition, and drew up a valuable document embodying the results of his researches. He was especially struck with three abuses, viz., the great increase of fees, the unsatisfactory keeping of the records, and the practice of examining witnesses by means of young and inexperienced clients. He quotes a flagrant instance of extortion on the part of the Serjeant-at-Arms, who had been sent with an ordinary process of the Court (of the Council) to a Gloucestershire gentleman some forty miles from Ludlow. He never executed the process, for he did not find the party, but he had the effrontery to demand against him before the Lord President the sum of £240 in fees; to his great chagrin he received no more than £5.

Pembroke found that he had an uphill task. In 1590 certain "libelling articles" were exhibited against the Council, but he was unable to justify himself in the ordinary course of law, and could only say indignantly, "I am enforced in defence of my honour to say that in these particulars which concern me alone, the first libeller and he who commented thereupon do both lie in their throats." Another vigorous campaign against abuses was begun in 1590; excessive fees were abolished, the number of superfluous counsellors, attorneys and clerks reduced, and the household management re-organized. But the Council had by now seen its best days; the offices were often regarded as convenient sinecures, and all important cases were dealt with elsewhere—in the Privy Council, the Star Chamber, or the Common Law Courts. Pembroke complained that he had been "misreported of without desert, and maliced without cause." On the other hand, in spite of undoubted abuses, it would seem that the Council was still esteemed. In a dialogue written in 1594 by George Owen, of Henllys, it is extolled as "generally the very place of refuge for the poor oppressed of this country of Wales to fly unto; and for this cause it is as greatly frequented with suits as any one court at Westminster whatsoever, the more for that it is the best cheap court in England for fees, and there is great speed made in trial of all causes." The speaker, Demetus, a Pembrokeshire man, admits that abuses exist, but considers that they are small in comparison with the merits of the court, and might easily be redressed.

With the close of Pembroke's term of office in 1602, the Council of the Marches entered upon troubled times. Thenceforth until the overthrow of its criminal jurisdiction in 1641, an agitation was directed against its jurisdiction in the Border counties, viz.: Shropshire, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Herefordshire. "The tedious business of the Marches," as it was truly called, occupied the attention of the best lawyers of the day, Bacon among them. The arguments on both sides were extremely complex, mainly because the word "Marches" was ambiguous; it might be used in the sense of Border, as at the present day, or in the restricted sense of the Marcher Lordships. Those who upheld the Council's jurisdiction took the word in the wide popular sense; those who opposed it, in the narrow legal sense, and as the two sides differed on this fundamental question, it is not surprising that the case dragged on to an unconscionable length. Its interest lay mainly in this, that the king's prerogative was conceived to be involved. "Discretionary governments," it was urged on the one side, "are most dangerous, and therefore the fewer of them in any state, the better." On the other hand, James emphatically maintained that all novelties were dangerous. The adversaries of the Council failed to gain their point in the reign of James I., but they succeeded in 1641, when, by the act abolishing the Star Chamber, the criminal jurisdiction of the Lord President and Council was overthrown.

From the strife and bitterness of these years it is a relief to turn to two scenes at Ludlow which bring before us with unwonted clearness the relations between the Council and the town. On November 4th, 1616, the day when Charles was created Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester at Whitehall, a stately ceremony was held at Ludlow. It is described in a quaint tract, "The Love of Wales to their sovereign Prince," printed in Clive's *History of Ludlow*. The celebration began with the affixing of the arms, name and style of the Prince under the pulpit in St. Lawrence's Church, on the Castle Chapel, and the Courthouse, also on the town gates and the chief posts and pillars of the market place. Then came a procession of the Justice and Council and officials, escorted by the bailiffs, magistrates and chief brethren, to the Church, where service was said, and "one Mr. Thomas Pierson, a grave reverend divine and worthy preacher, made a very learned sermon of an hour and half long." As the company came out of the market-place they stopped to listen to Latin and English verses "principally invented and made by the painful industry of that judicious and laborious Master of Arts, Humfrey Herbert, Chief Schoolmaster of His Majesty's Free School there, upon one day's warning." Specimens of these have been preserved by our conscientious author. They are not a little pathetic in their confident assurance that the young Prince will "protect this happy government," and their ardent hope—

O prosper may he, and his glory more
Than any Charles the world had e'er before.

The procession then passed on to the courthouse, where the Justice delivered in praise of the Prince an oration which was received with playing of music, beating of drums, whistling of flutes, sounding of trumpets, shouts and volleys, "the echo and report whereof resounded admirably to the great solace and comfort of all present." By now it was one o'clock—dinner-time for the Justice and Council in the castle, and for the bailiffs and burgesses in the town. No sooner was their meal ended than the bailiffs again appeared with the choir, pennon-bearers and waits, for evening service in the castle chapel. The festivities were not even then ended, for on the morrow was celebrated the deliverance of King and Queen, Prince and Parliament from the "Papists' treasonable and horrible conspiracy, and unmatchable intended practice of the Gunpowder Treason."

Far more noteworthy was the celebration, eighteen years later (1634), of the entry upon office of the Earl of Bridgewater, who had been nominated Lord President in 1631. He came to Ludlow attended by a large concourse of the neighbouring nobility and gentry, and the hospitalities, which continued through the greater part of 1634, were crowned by the performance on Michaelmas Day of Milton's *Comus* in the great hall, now called the Comus Hall. The part of the Lady was performed by Lady Alice Egerton, then fifteen years of age; the parts of the two Brothers by Lord Brackley and Mr. Thomas Egerton, still young boys.

It is a striking proof of the immortalizing power of poetry that the existence of President and Council is best remembered now because Milton, still young and little known, placed the scene of *Comus* in Ludlow and the neighbourhood. Seldom can a great poem have come before the world in a setting so fair as on that Michaelmas evening, when the Attendant Spirit entered to tell the expectant throng how—

> All this tract that fronts the falling sun
> A noble Peer of mickle trust and power
> Has in his charge with tempered awe to guide
> An old and haughty nation, proud in arms;
> Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore,
> Are coming to attend their father's state
> And new-intrusted sceptre.

The Earl lived to see the downfall of the Court over which he had come to preside with so much pomp. After his first visit he did not often come to Ludlow, but he received frequent letters from his steward there, Henry Eccleston, an inveterate grumbler, who troubled his master with all manner of trivial domestic details. In one letter he even complains of a certain scullery woman who stole spoons, saucers and dishes, and hid them in her trunk, and in another he laments that the fines for the last two terms have not brought in enough to pay the laundress. The Earl replies in an equally doleful strain, insisting that Eccleston must be as economical as he can, and that his own lands and revenues must not be spent on maintaining the castle. However, the Earl watched carefully over the business of the Council, such as it was, and to his methodical habits we owe the preservation of a number of entry books for the years 1632 to 1642, which throw much light on the character of the cases that came before the court. From these it appears that debts and affrays were the causes of many suits, but that other matters were dealt with as well. All through 1641 the position of the Court was extremely precarious; bailiffs who tried to arrest offenders were assaulted, and orders were neglected not only in the four counties, but in the Principality. The civil jurisdiction continued up to the outbreak of the war, and an Entry Book is extant for Trinity Term, 1642, showing that the number of suits was but 69, as against 453 for the corresponding term of 1640.

A few months later the Civil War broke out, and the Court fell into abeyance. At the Restoration it was revived with respect to its civil jurisdiction, which was held to be untouched by the Star Chamber Act of 1641. The new Lord President, appointed in 1661, was the Earl of Carbery, who in 1665 was made Constable of Ludlow Castle. The seal of the Court was engraved—the size of a twenty-shilling piece—by Thomas Simon, the king's engraver, and a large number of officials were appointed.

Ludlow Castle had suffered severely during the Civil Wars, and considerable sums were allotted for its repair. It would seem, however, that the Earl neglected the buildings, put in old household stuff, and converted to his own use the plate and goods provided.

Between the Restoration and the Revolution the Court of the Marches became more and more insignificant. On one occasion only was its former dignity revived, when in 1682 the Duke of Beaufort, last President but one, made a state journey through his Presidency. This "Beaufort Progress" is described at great length in a MS. volume written and illustrated by Thomas Dingley, or Dineley, one of the Duke's escort at the time. It has twice been reproduced in facsimile, and forms an important record for Wales and the Border on the eve of the Revolution.[1] On the arrival of the cavalcade at Ludlow, the Duke was received by the Bailiffs and the Common Council with great expressions of joy by the people. In the centre of the town, near the High Cross and public fountain, His Grace was presented with sweetmeats and wines, after which a reception was held at the castle. On the next day, after service in the castle chapel, the Duke, "in his rich robes of presidency," walked to the courthouse, where, after the Chief Justice of Chester had delivered the charge, the rest of the forenoon was spent in hearing cases. After this all the company were again entertained at a magnificent dinner in the castle, each person striving to outdo the rest in manifestations of loyalty to His Majesty and respect to His Grace.

This brief sketch of the history of the Council of the Marches shows that for over two hundred years it was closely connected with Ludlow. The castle was its most frequent meeting-place, and among the documents dealing with its proceedings are numerous notices of repairs carried out under Lee and Sydney, and the Earls of Bridgewater and Carbery. Coats of arms to the number of 256 once existed in the Castle, including the arms of various sovereigns, the Lords President, the Councillors, and some of the early owners of the castle. Several of these are preserved to this day in the dining room of the Bull Inn. During the Civil War the king's goods at Ludlow Castle were sold by order of the Council of State, the value of the whole being £341 8s. 4d.

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[1] That part of it which concerns Ludlow was communicated to the *Ludlow Advertiser* by Mr. J. H. Williams, Town Clerk of the borough, and printed in the issue for November 25th, 1905.

How far the castle had fallen from its ancient glory is shown by the entry under the heading "Court House of Justice." This contained a feather bolster and a brass pot, value fourteen shillings, while the seat of justice, table and benches were valued at ten shillings. Three pieces of tapestry hangings formerly used in the Court were valued at £4 6s. 8d. In the withdrawing room were two pictures, "the one of the late king, and the other of his queen"; but less store was set by them than by the table and benches, for they were valued at ten shillings. After 1689 the castle was left to fall into decay. By degrees the fabric was stripped of lead, timber and carvings, but even in 1708 forty rooms were entire, and sixty years later the arms of some of the Lords President were still visible. In the Ludlow Museum is an ancient record or deed chest with three locks, which in the early part of the eighteenth century was filled with tapestry and armour, and conveyed for safety from the castle to the church; but in vain, for it was rifled of its contents.

In a MS. volume relating to Shropshire preserved in the Bodleian Library, is a noteworthy entry relating to Ludlow, which appears to establish the fate of the voluminous records of the Council, once preserved in the record-chamber within the Castle.[1] The writer speaks of the courthouse as a place "once of great request, in which all the records belonging to the Court of the Marches were kept; but since the Revolution it has been utterly ruined, and the records have been taken out by the dragoons and people of the town for their own use, or sold by the dragoons to them."

Many memorials of the Councillors and their relations are preserved in St. Lawrence's Church at Ludlow, which contains the monuments of Edmund Walter, Edmund Waties, Ambrozia Sydney, Sir Robert and Dame Anne Townesend, and Dame Mary Eure, wife of a Lord

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[1] Blakeway. *Salop MSS.* ii. *Shropshire Parochial History*, H to N. *Shelf Catalogue*, No. 22,090.

LUDLOW
CASTLE

President in the reign of James I. The churchwardens' accounts show how important a part the Council played in the life of the borough. Such matters as the repair of the Lord President's pew, and the fees paid to bell-ringers on his arrival at Ludlow, are frequently mentioned. The Council's overthrow was clearly resented, and when in May, 1649, Sir Marmaduke Lloyd's pew was granted to the mayor, a proviso was added that if the former occupier came again to reside in the town, the grant should be void. The town authorities did their best to welcome the Lord President and Councillors; one entry records that 3d. was paid for someone to attend Mr. Justice's coming on the steeple, the high tower of the church being the best available place of outlook.

In the valuable collection of borough records at Ludlow there is abundant evidence to illustrate the relations between the Council and the borough authorities. Gifts of money, wine, oxen, sugar, and so forth, were constantly made to the Lord President and Council, and even the Councillors' wives sometimes had a share. On the other hand, the corporation received presents of bucks and does from the Lord President.

The actual working of the Court of the Marches is shown by the large number of orders for stay of suits before the bailiffs, or for release of prisoners from gaol "according to the ancient privilege of our Court with our said Council and our instructions to them in that behalf granted." Such orders were often issued in favour of persons employed in the castle household or on repairs of the buildings. Often the bailiffs would be ordered to come up to the castle lodge and receive prisoners who were to be set in the pillory or whipped in the market-place. Once they were ordered to set in the stocks one John Clench, "for stealing of our pewter out of our castle of Ludlow." He was to be set in the stocks in the midst of the market-place, with one of his legs through the same and a pewter dish about his neck hanging before him, and remain thus from eleven in the forenoon till one in the afternoon. Another order directs that a certain Griffith ap Rees, "who was taken upon suspicion of picking of pockets and thievery, and his hand taken in another man's pockets," was to be whipped in open market between twelve and two o'clock, and then brought back to the Porter's Lodge.

Members of the Council at times held office in the borough, *e.g.*, Sir John Bridgeman and Henry Townesend were Recorders, receiving a salary of £2 per annum. Several of the Councillors built houses in Ludlow. Churchyard tells us of "the fair house by the gate of the making of Justice Walter," of the "fair house that Master Secretary Fox did bestow great charges on," and of "the fair house belonging to Mr. Townesend," that was once a friary. Respect towards the Council was rigidly enforced by the town authorities, as is seen by the abject petition for release by a man imprisoned in Galford's Tower (the town gaol) for having uttered words of abuse against Sir Thomas Cornewall.

The influence of the Council on the condition of the town is shown in a very unfavourable light in the following passage from Baxter's *Memoirs*:—

> The house was great, there being four judges, the King's attorney, the clerk of the fines, with all their servants, and all the lord president's servants and many more; and the town was full of temptations, through the multitude of persons (counsellors, attorneys, officers, and clerks), and much given to tippling and excess.

After the Restoration the presence of the Council could do the town little good and little harm, for the household numbered only ten as against the long list of officials in Sydney's day.

Such in brief outline is the history of the Council which for over two centuries had jurisdiction in Wales and the Border counties. It was founded in days when there was ample need for extraordinary measures, if the abuses of feudalism—conflict of jurisdictions, private war, riots and robberies—were to be repressed. For nearly a century the Council punished lawlessness with which the common law courts had no strength to deal. During the succeeding half-century it acted both as a judicial and an administrative body, the instrument of the Privy Council in Wales and the Marches. During this period the dignity of the Council increased, and its working became more regular, but the cases with which it dealt were less serious than in earlier years, and by the end of the century its decline had begun. In the seventeenth century it was mainly a court for the settlement of petty suits, and the elaborate establishment which had descended from the days when princes had kept court at Ludlow seemed unnecessary. Unpopular as it became, it had done useful work in the past, and even as late as the Revolution some held that a special court for Wales was a distinct advantage, considering the difficulty and expense of a journey to Westminster. Had the Council come to an end with the sixteenth century, it would probably have been remembered with gratitude; by lasting nearly a century too long it gained an evil reputation for extravagance and oppression. Of the Council in the Marches, as of many institutions in the past, it may be said with truth: "To everything there is a season; a time to be born, and a time to die." [1]

C. A. J. SKEEL.

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[1] Further details as to the history of the Council of the Marches may be found in the Author's *The Council in the Marches of Wales* (Hugh Rees, London, 1904).

SHROPSHIRE AND THE CIVIL WAR

1642-1646

By John Ernest Auden, M.A.

Vicar of Tong

THERE is not room in a short and slight sketch to discuss the causes which gave rise to the struggle between Charles I. and his Parliament. Suffice it, therefore, to say that the breaking off of negotiations was followed on both sides by preparation for immediate war. One of the first acts of the King was to forward to Shropshire the appointment of a Commission of Array for that county, dated June 22nd, 1642. The selected members of this were Prince Charles (then aged 12); Thomas, Earl of Arundel, of Clun; John, Earl of Bridgwater, of Ellesmere, Lord President of the Marches (who soon afterwards joined the Parliament); William, Lord Craven, of Stokesay; Edward, Lord Herbert, of Chirbury; John Weld, of Willey, then High Sheriff; and others. By virtue of it they were required to send out a warrant summoning the "Ancient Traynes and freehould bands of the County," and to take care that they were "well arrayed" and "under the Conduct of such Captaynes as were persons of qualitie, honor, and considerable Estates and Interest in the County."

But Shropshire was "not all on one side, like a Bridgnorth election," and two men at least lost no time in shewing whose cause they had determined to support. Thomas Hunt, of Shrewsbury, assumed the position of Captain of Militia, then called up men and began to make preparations to defend the county town against the King; and Robert Charlton, of Apley, near Wellington, got together nearly two hundred recruits to join him. Charlton, assisted by the Rev. Samuel Fisher, "a godlie minister," afterwards at St. Mary's, Shrewsbury, had also tried to win over his neighbour, Sir Richard Newport, of High Ercall, though to no purpose. Sir Richard came to Shrewsbury and assisted Sir Francis Ottley, of Pitchford, in strongly opposing Hunt. The firm stand which these two made for the King had great effect in the county, where many were then wavering as to which side to take, and was well remembered also when the Parliament gained the upper hand; for among the charges brought against Sir Richard was this—that after opposing Captain Hunt "the said Sir Richard was one of the forwardest of the Committee of Array, being one himself to remove the magazine (which was by consent committed to ye charge of certaine well affected Aldermen in Shrewsbury) to Bridgnorth and Ludlow; all which we believe, being many of us present, was the loss of this towne and ye cause why ye King was encouraged to come to Shrewsbury."

Whether owing to Newport's influence or not, on August 8th (a fortnight almost before the King raised his standard at Nottingham), the Grand Jury at the Shropshire Assizes, to the number of 103, signed a declaration averring they were "ready to obey His Majesty in all lawful ways for putting the county in a posture of defence, and to adventure their lives and fortunes in defence of his royal and sacred person." Many of the clergy of the county also signed a similar resolution a few days later.

The receipt of such promises probably influenced Charles considerably in taking the final step of raising his standard. This he did on August 25th, 1642, a wet and stormy day, and at once used all the means in his power to rally an army round it, sending, *e.g.*, orders to Sir Francis Ottley to raise a company of two hundred infantry, and take them without loss of time to Shrewsbury in order to secure the town and defend the loyal inhabitants.

Leaving Nottingham on September 13th, Charles marched to Derby, his mind not yet made up whether to go to Chester or Shrewsbury, though resolved "to sit down near the borders of Wales, where the power of the Parliament had been least prevalent, and where some regiments of foot were levying for his service."[1] At Derby, however, enthusiastic accounts reached him of the loyalty of Shropshire, and after a three nights' stay he proceeded to Uttoxeter on the 16th, to Stafford on the 17th, and to Wellington on the 19th. At this last town a rendezvous was held of all the royal forces, and after the military orders had been read to each regiment, the King placed himself in their centre, and made his famous declaration that he would "defend and maintain the Protestant Religion, and the just privileges and freedom of Parliament."

The next day, towards evening, His Majesty entered Shrewsbury amid the acclamations of the mayor, aldermen, and populace, and took up his residence at the Council House, several of his Court finding accommodation with the Headmaster of the Schools, Thomas Chaloner, and the Second Master, David Evans.

But while all this was taking place, the Parliament had not been inactive. It had, in July, appointed the Earl of Essex as Captain General of its forces; and he, knowing that the King's great object was to march on London, made it a special aim to keep him at a distance from the capital. For this end he placed garrisons in a series of towns from Northampton westward, to bar the King's path, and himself seized Worcester, not, however, without a smart skirmish with Prince Rupert. Though the Prince won reputation and renown as a dashing cavalry leader from this fight on September 23rd, he found Worcester too large and weak a place to hold with the forces at his disposal, and retreated towards Shrewsbury. Essex thereupon marched north to seize other towns.

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[1] Clarendon.

Advancing towards Ludlow he drove in Rupert's outposts, and attacked the town, which the Prince had fortified with entrenchments and the mounting of many guns. These opened fire as soon as the army of the Parliament came within range, and the contest lasted from about 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, October 1st. At length the Royalists, having lost many men, were compelled to evacuate the castle and retreat.

Ludlow in his power, Essex turned his attention to Bridgnorth, and the next day sent his Quartermaster there to arrange for the billeting of ten regiments of horse and nearly six thousand foot, a proceeding which was only carried through by proclaiming that those who refused would incur the danger of having their houses plundered by soldiers "accustomed to take upon themselves the execution of justice without fear, or law, or religion." On the evening of Tuesday (October 4th), the Earl was expected to enter his new quarters. But about mid-day scouts brought word that a large force of Royalists under Lord Strange, Prince Maurice, and other officers, was drawing near. (For defence Bridgnorth had received from Worcester the night before five field pieces and three troops of horse.) A general muster of citizens was at once ordered, and every man from sixteen to fifty armed himself with what weapon he could obtain. The guns mounted upon the churches and other suitable positions gave the oncoming troops a warm reception. The bows and arrows of the townsmen, too, proved efficacious against the enemy's musketeers, who wore no defensive armour. While the skirmish was taking place Essex himself approached with several regiments of horse. To meet them Lord Strange drew up some of his own troopers in an open field, but attacked by cavalry front and rear they were soon thrown into confusion, and his whole force retreated, abandoning Bridgnorth to the Parliament. The casualty list of both sides was reported to be together about eighty killed and forty-five wounded; but the Royalists lost Lord Paulet and six other officers taken prisoner.

The King had meanwhile left Shrewsbury on Friday, September 23rd, lunched at Whitchurch on his way, and reached Chester about 5 p.m. Here he stayed till the 27th, and then returned.

On the morrow a muster was held of the Royal troops "in a meadow called the Gay," where also the principal gentry of the county had been convened by the new sheriff, Henry Bromley, of Shrawardine. To them and to the soldiers His Majesty made a speech, in which he expressed his satisfaction that the insolence and misfortunes which drove him about his kingdom had brought him to so good and faithful a part of it, and his hopes that they would not be great sufferers by the excesses of his soldiers, which he promised to do his best to restrain. He then told them he had sent for a mint, and would melt down all his plate and sell or mortgage all his own land to relieve the pressure, and adjured them to afford him pecuniary help.

His last appeal did not fall on deaf ears. Sir Richard Newport gave £6,000, and was made a Peer; Sir Thomas Lister, of Rowton, a purse of gold, and was knighted; others helped as they could. And when the Mint arrived from Aberystwith "such proportions of plate and money were brought in that the army was fully and constantly paid."[1]

The School authorities also lent £600 for the Royal Cause—never to be returned. A printing press was ordered, but apparently was not made great use of, for a year later complaints were sent to the Governor of Shrewsbury that his "press was idle, and did the King no service; and, while the Parliament's pamphlets were in everyone's hands, no country work was published to antidote their poison." This was not a groundless charge, for most of the news letters which have been preserved are in the interests of the latter.

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[1] Clarendon.

On his last Sunday, Charles, at a celebration of the Holy Communion at St. Mary's Church, repeated the solemn protestation he had already made at Wellington. Then, on the Wednesday following, October 12th, 1642, orders were given for the whole army to move onward to Bridgnorth, now freed from the enemy. For Essex, on hearing how the King's army had grown in strength during the stay at Shrewsbury, had thought it prudent to evacuate this town and Ludlow, and retire back to Worcester. Most of the Royal forces proceeded by road, though the ammunition and some troops were conveyed by river.

Immediately after Bridgnorth was reached a proclamation was published, accusing among others Humphrey Mackworth, Thomas Hunt, and Thomas Nichols, all of Shrewsbury, of treason, and ordering their arrest, but they had, to use an expression of Head Master Chaloner, "vespertilionised." On the 13th there was a rendezvous of the whole army, which appeared very cheerful. Two days later it left *en route* for Oxford and London; and on the 25th the first pitched battle of the Civil War was fought at Edge Hill, where neither side could with truth claim a victory.

After Edge Hill Shropshire seems to have been fairly quiet for a month or two. But towards the close of the year the principal gentry of the county entered on a mutual engagement or resolution to raise one entire regiment of dragoons (our modern mounted infantry), of which Sir Vincent Corbet, formerly Captain of Horse, was to be Commander-in-Chief. The clergy of the county at the same time offered him one hundred horse, and the townsmen of Shrewsbury promised a troop of sixty dragoons and two hundred foot for Sir Francis Ottley, Captain of their Town. December 20th was the day, and Battlefield the place, for the money or the horses to be brought in.

These troops soon saw active service, for directly they were enlisted they were ordered to Whitchurch as a guard against inroads from Nantwich, which latter town they were drawn out to attack on January 28th, but met with no success, for Sir William Brereton took a considerable number prisoner, and in his Despatches accused Sir Vincent of crawling away on all fours to escape recognition, and then running bareheaded for six miles. At all events this latter officer wrote the next day to Shrewsbury for all the surgeons possible to go at once to Whitchurch, for "there was great need of them."

However a greater danger soon threatened Shropshire in the advance of the large Parliamentary army under Lord Brooke, reported to consist of 15,000 dragoons; and with him, to the consternation, no doubt, of many Royalists, were Sir John Corbet, of Adderley, Thomas Hunt and John Wingfield, of Shrewsbury, and many others who had been "plundered" as rebels. While his main army halted to besiege Lichfield Close, some advance guards entered the confines of the county at Newport.

But on March 2nd Brooke met his death by a shot from the Cathedral while directing the bombardment, and all immediate danger from that side was averted by the battle of Hopton Heath on March 19th, in which the Parliamentarians were defeated, and the Earl of Northampton, the Royalist commander, killed. Sir William Brereton in his report of this fight says:—"The Shropshire horse and dragoons came on with great resolution and boldness, and in very good order," which is high praise from an enemy.

At the end of March the King, in order to cope with the increasing strength of his opponents, appointed Lord Capel as special commander of the troops in Shropshire and the adjacent counties, with Colonel-General Sir Nicholas Byron as second in command, and Sir Michael Woodhouse as Sergeant-Major of Foot under them. And no sooner had the new Commander reached Shrewsbury than he summoned a Council of War to meet in the Library of the School. The names of those present at its second sitting, on April 3rd, 1643, have been preserved. They were Arthur, Lord Capel, Lieut.-General of Salop; Henry Bromley, High Sheriff; Sir Francis Ottley, Governor of Shrewsbury; Sergt.-Major General Woodhouse; Lieut.-Col. Sir John Mennes, General of Ordnance to the Prince of Wales; Sir Richard Lee, of Langley; Sir John Weld, of Willey, ex-High Sheriff; Edward Cressett, Esq., of Upton Cressett; and Eusebius Andrews, Secretary.

Capel also lost no time in inspecting his various garrisons, and ordered the defences of Shrewsbury, Ludlow, and Bridgnorth to be strengthened, and a more careful watch to be kept. At the first of these, according to Gough,[1] the gates of the Castle were repaired, many houses near it pulled down, and water brought from the river by means of a deep ditch. A strong fort was also built at the upper end of Frankwell, on the road leading to Oswestry and Welshpool, in which cannon were mounted. At Bridgnorth outworks were erected to guard the fords, and the Town Hall, which stood outside the walls, was destroyed. The North and Hungry Gates were also garrisoned. Troops, too, were billeted in many of the castles and manor houses of the county, amongst others Apley, Caus, and Tong, the water-way of the Severn being protected by the use of Ensdon House, Atcham Church, Bentall, Apley Park, and Buildwas, as block houses. Lord Capel himself, with Sir Michael Woodhouse, fixed his headquarters at Whitchurch in order to prevent incursions of the enemy from Nantwich, and to keep open communication between Chester and Shrewsbury, Sir Vincent Corbet being posted with his Shropshire regiment at Malpas.

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[1] *History of Middle*, p. 176.

To counteract the effects of Capel's activity, the Parliament on April 10th, 1643, appointed a "Committee of Twenty for the Association of the Counties of Shropshire, Staffordshire, and Worcestershire." Its members were the chief local opponents of the King, with Sir John Corbet as President and Colonel-General, and Thomas Mytton, of Halston, as his Assistant-in-Chief.

Danger now threatened the King's cause in the south of the county, for Sir William Waller, having taken Hereford on April 25th, advanced to Ludlow and laid siege to the Castle. Unable, however, to obtain possession of this fortress at the first attempt, and in fear for his own safety, since the Cavaliers were very strong in the neighbourhood, he retreated once more to Hereford.

But in a few weeks a heavy disaster befell His Majesty in another quarter. An entry in the parish register of the place says:—

> **The 30 day of May, 1643, Whitchurch was surprised and taken by Sir Will. Brewerton's Forces.**

The circumstances were these. Capel had drawn out the greater part of the garrison to accompany his expedition to relieve Warrington. Brereton learned of this through a prisoner, slipped by Woodhouse (the deputy governor), seized the town, killed many royalists, took forty prisoners, and as booty five hundred arms, and £2,000 collected to pay Capel's soldiers.

Next month, the Parliament, wishing to push matters, appointed Sir Thomas Middleton, of Chirk, as Sergeant-Major General of all its forces in North Wales and the bordering counties, and the Earl of Denbigh as Lieut.-General for Shropshire, Cheshire, and Staffordshire.

Capel, learning of this, at once thought of the undefended state of Oswestry, and on July 10th rode over with one thousand horse and dragoons to entrench and fortify the town, and by this probably saved it for a time for the King.

Up to now the Parliament had no garrison of any size in Shropshire. The first step, therefore, of the new officers and the committee was to discover a place whence they could most successfully annoy their opponents. Wem was the only unoccupied town near the centre of the county, and though only eight miles from Whitchurch and ten from Shrewsbury, it was determined to seize it. Accordingly, Colonels Mytton, Hunt, and Mackworth, accompanied by the Rev. Richard Baxter, now a military chaplain, got together a body of troops, marched to Wem, and set to work to fortify it. Ten days after their coming Sir Thomas Middleton himself arrived with seven great pieces of ordnance, four cases of drakes,[1] forty carriages of ammunition, and a large body of recruits from London.

Emboldened by this great access of strength, he, with his colleague Brereton, determined to make an attempt on Shrewsbury, whose garrison was now mainly the Train Bands, the regular troops having gone away on the march which ended in the first battle of Newbury (September 20th)—a disastrous day for the King. They, therefore, collected about seven thousand men and began the siege. They "made their approaches very near the town, and gained the bridge, whereby they raised their batteries to the great annoyance of the enemy," captured "some part of the suburbs," and slew or took many of the defenders when they made a sally.

News of Shrewsbury's peril having reached Oxford, Prince Rupert instantly started to its aid with 3,500 horse, picking up on his way the royal forces at Coventry. Hearing of his rapid approach, Brereton and Middleton raised the siege, and retired to await another opportunity.

To annoy Capel and prevent his incursions into the neighbourhood of Wem, Brereton quartered two or three companies of dragoons in Loppington Church.[1] This being looked upon as a piece of impertinence at Shrewsbury, Capel attempted a surprise. Failing in this, his men attacked the church, the garrison refusing to yield and firing from the windows. Thinking it hazardous to life to attempt a storm, orders were given to fire the roof and the porch. An officer of Capel's regiment, describing the skirmish in a letter to his lordship's daughter, says that his commander "shewed us great gallantry and skill in storming and taking Loppington Church, where the enemy had fixed a garrison, till my lord forced them out, and was the busiest among his soldiers in carrying faggots to the porch." Then a surrender was made, and the prisoners at once conducted by the Royalist horse to Shrewsbury. Brereton, as soon as he had heard of their peril, sent a strong force to assist his garrison, and though it came too late to prevent their capture it overtook Capel's foot and defeated them with the loss of Captain Needham, son of Lord Kilmorey, and other prisoners.

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[1] A drake was a small field-piece of narrow bore; and "a case" or "box" of drakes was a piece of artillery consisting of several barrels united together, somewhat after the fashion of a mitrailleuse, which could be fired simultaneously, or in quick succession.

This partial defeat, and the presence of the garrison at Wem rankled in Capel's mind, and he began to make arrangements to deprive the enemy of their new conquest. Therefore, collecting all the troops which could be spared from the neighbouring garrisons, he assembled them at Ellesmere, in number about three thousand, with six guns. The first night the camp was at Colemere, whence they marched to Whitchurch, which had not been retained by the enemy. Middleton, expecting the attack on Wem, drew out most of the garrison to Prees Heath, and waited long for Capel. But the latter suddenly altered his course, and at full speed made for Nantwich on ascertaining that most of the soldiers stationed there had been drawn out to Wem. There were, however, enough left to repulse his assault. Middleton, on his part, led his men hard after

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[1] Churches were so frequently used by both sides in the Civil War for military purposes simply because they were often practically the only building in the place capable of defence. This was also the case in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1.

Capel, who at their approach doubled back to make an attempt on Wem in their absence. Here he arrived on Tuesday morning, at once dismounted about eighty horse, and sent them to storm the entrenchments, which they succeeded in gaining; but several of their officers having been wounded, and Col. Wynn killed, they drew back and could not be induced to try a second time. This was more than Capel could bear, and in rage and grief he refused to leave the trenches his men had so lately mastered, but took out his pipe and proceeded to light it, though all the while exposed to a hot fire from the enemy's musketeers, his friends having at last to force him away. The casualty list at Wem shows what was more than once forgotten by our officers in South Africa, the usual costliness of a frontal attack on an entrenched position, for the garrison only lost in killed Major Marrow and two men, but there fell of the storming party Colonel Wynn and between thirty and forty soldiers.

By the time a retreat to Shrewsbury was ordered, Middleton's forces had come near enough to enter on a pursuit, which was followed up to Lee Bridge. Here, however, Capel fought a determined rearguard action in order that his artillery and baggage might reach safety. And though in the end the Parliamentary troops gained the bridge, it was with a loss of five killed and fifteen wounded, while on the other side ten were killed and many wounded and made prisoners, among those mortally hurt being Sir Thomas Scriven, of Frodesley, Governor of Whitchurch. But ere this the field train had reached its destination without loss.

This success was the last gained by the Parliament for some two months, for the cessation of hostilities in Ireland enabled the King to recall his troops from there, and also to enlist on his side many native Irish. In fact, on November 21st Middleton sent word to the House of Commons that the Royalist forces had so increased in Shropshire and the neighbouring counties that he must be supplied with more men and money to cope with them. He also withdrew most of his ammunition and stores from Wem to Nantwich for its greater security.

But about this time things were not going on satisfactorily at Shrewsbury. Disturbances arose between Capel's troops and the townsmen, which ended in a riot, in which six or seven of the latter were killed by the former, an act of which the commander took no cognizance. The ill-feeling engendered by this caused his removal, and the appointment of a new general in Prince Rupert, known to readers of *John Inglesant* as the Palsgrave. But before he could take up his command the King's cause had suffered a heavy disaster in Shropshire.

Owing to the crew of a ship conveying ammunition from Bristol to Chester mutinying, and taking the cargo to Liverpool, then in the hands of the Parliament, the Governor of Chester was in great want of that article. He, therefore, sent a strong convoy to fetch a supply from Shrewsbury. There were, however, many traitors in this town; one at least in a high position. For the Sequestration Committee of Shropshire, on the close of the war, wrote:—

> When we first took footing within this county and were penned up in that poor garrison of Wem, having ye enemy round about us, his residence being ye most part in Shrewsbury, Sir William Owen, of Condover, Knight, who was in the [King's] Commission of Array, held correspondence with us, and by his faithful constant intelligence to us of ye enemy's motions and designs, was a great means of our security and preservation in that place; and in ye meantime of that intercourse and compliance with us, he freely offered us the possession of his house, being a strong stone building within 3 myles distance of Shrewsbury, and might have speedily been made defensible had we been in a condition to have accepted it, and to have garrisoned it for the Parliament.[1]

Sir William, or some other "false brother" in Shrewsbury, sent intelligence of this convoy to Wem. Colonel Mytton determined to attempt its capture. On the way from Shrewsbury towards Chester, a halt for the night was made at Ellesmere. Mytton ordered out horse and foot, made a thoroughly unexpected night attack, and succeeded in taking Sir Nicholas Byron (Governor of Chester), Sir Richard Willis (General of Horse), five other officers, 100 troopers, 250 horses and arms, and all the ammunition.

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[1] Signed at Shrewsbury on May 30th, 1646, by Humphrey Mackworth, Robert Charlton, Andrew Lloyd, Leighton Owen, and Robert Clive.

From an] ALBRIGHT HUSSEY [*Old Engraving*

Cheered by this successful *coup de main*, Mytton determined to try a stratagem on Oswestry. Its Governor, Colonel Lloyd, of Llanforda, was a *bon vivant*, and liked a good dinner. It was proposed that a seeming friend should invite him to dine at his house; a troop of cavalry should surprise him there, take him before Oswestry, and force him to order his officers to surrender the town. Unfortunately for the success of this plot two of Mytton's scouts were taken, and Lloyd, discovering what was on foot, hurried back to his castle.

The presence of the garrison at Wem must have been, to say the least, very inconvenient to the inhabitants of Shrewsbury. And there is probably some truth in the sarcastic words of the *Informator Rusticus*, a Parliamentary news sheet, when it declares that the fortifying of that place is

> Somewhat offensive and prejudicial to the ladies in Shrewsbury, who by this means are prevented of taking the fresh air and repairing to their country habitation, by which it is to be presumed their blood will wax pale, and they frustrate of that delectable recreation as the country might afford them.

Be this as it may, Sir Francis Ottley did his best to curb inroads from Wem by posting soldiers in Moreton Corbet Castle and Albright Hussey Manor House. Concerning the garrison at the latter place, Gough, in his *History of Middle*,[1] tells the following story:—

> The garrison soldiers from Wem made theire outroads many times allmost to the walls of Shrewsbury; and to prevent this insolence, the Governor of Shrewsbury placed a garrison att Albright Hussey [near Battlefield], and [Sergeant Preece, *alias*] Scoggan, was governor of it. A party of Horse of the Parliament side came on a Sunday, in the afternoone, and faced this garrison, and Scoggan, standing in a window in a upper room, cryed aloud that the others heard him, "Lett such a number goe to such a place, and soe many to such a place, and let twenty come with mee"; (butt hee had but eight in all in the house). And Scoggan seeing one Philip Bunny among the enemyes, who was a taylor, borne in Hadnall, hee tookea fowling gun, and called to Bunny and said, "Bunny have at thee!" and shott him through the legge and killed his horse. The Parliament soldiers took up Bunny and departed.

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[1] *History of Middle*, p. 81.

Soon after this the garrison was recalled att the request of Mr. Pelham Corbett, who feared that the Parliament soldiers would come and fire his buildings.

Prince Rupert arrived in Shrewsbury in February, 1643-4, and in a very short time exhibited to Shropshire men his famous dash and skill as a leader of Horse. "For Rupert never comes but to conquer or to fall." It having been reported that a column about seven hundred strong, under Sir William Fairfax and Colonel Mytton, were quartering at Market Drayton, he drew out some of his own men to attempt a surprise. But the Shrewsbury traitors sent word beforehand of the intended attack, and when he neared the town the Prince found a strong body of hostile cavalry drawn out ready to meet him. He was with the vanguard of only two troops (the main body being nearly two miles behind), but without a moment's hesitation led them to the charge with such reckless courage that they dashed the opposing squadrons into fragments, killed twenty-two, and took Fairfax's colours and one hundred horses without losing a single man themselves. After bivouacing that night in Market Drayton, the Royalists returned next morning to Shrewsbury unmolested.

But now a fierce struggle was going on in the south of the county. When the Civil War broke out, Hopton Castle was the property of Henry Wallop, one of the fiercest of Republicans. Naturally it was garrisoned for the Parliament, but apparently not till February 18th, 1643-4. Samuel More, of Linley, was put in command of the sixteen men who were first sent to hold it. After repulsing one attack with this handful, he and his Lieutenant, Major Phillips, sent for reinforcements to Brampton Brian, but only enough came to make the garrison thirty-two all told. They had not long to wait before Sir Lewis Kirke, from Ludlow, began the investment. His troops soon made a breach in the outer wall, but on rushing through, appear to have been caught like rats in a trap between that and the inner one, for they lost Captain Vaughan, of Burlton, and many others before they could effect a retreat. In a day or two came three pieces of ordnance, and early the next morning after their arrival, a summons was sent to the castle that if More did not surrender before the firing of one gun he and his men must expect no quarter. A defiant answer was returned, and the artillery opened fire. The shots killed one of the garrison, wounded two more, and made some impression on the walls, but the attack which followed was repulsed with a loss to the besieged of one slain and three or four hurt, and a much heavier one to the besiegers. The garrison, too few in number to serve in reliefs, were at length worn out with fatigue, and desired Colonel More and Major Phillips to ask for terms. The reply was that the surrender must be unconditional, for no other would be accepted. To this More at last agreed, and gave up the castle. But angered, no doubt, by the obstinate defence of such a small force, though at the same time acting strictly according to military law, Sir Lewis Kirke ordered all except More to instant execution. In the Register of Hopton is this entry:—"Occisi fuere 29 in castro Hoptoniensi, inter quos Henricus Gregorye, senex," which tells the fate of brave, if in this instance misguided, men.[1]

Hopton lost, the Parliament had now only three garrisons in Shropshire, viz.: Wem, Longford, and Tong. The Committee, therefore, determined to make an attempt to take Wellington Church and Apley Castle, both at

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[1] Col. More does not deny in his account that the surrender was wholly unconditional, indeed he explained to the garrison of Brampton Brian, when advising them to surrender, that Sir Lewis Kirke had in no way broken his pledge. "The custom we hold in warres is to punish, and that with death, those who wilfully opinionate themselves to defend a place which by rules of warre cannot be kept," says an old authority. This custom was accepted by both sides. In July, 1645, the Parliament "put to the sword" (*i.e.*, killed in cold blood) the whole (to the number of seventy) of the Royalist garrison of Canon Frome, Hereford, for presuming to hold an indefensible position.

HOPTON CASTLE :

that time held for the King. With this object Mytton drew out five hundred men from Wem and Longford, and was successful in both enterprises, for a news-letter says:—"Col. Mytton took Wellington Church and Apley House, having kill'd many, and taken 28 prisoners."

Leaving a strong force in the latter place, the main body were returning to their quarters when a hastily-collected band of Royalists from Apley Park (near Bridgnorth), Benthall, and Shifnal Manor House, suddenly fell upon and completely routed them, with a loss of fifty-five killed, including Captain Lyon, and seventy-two prisoners.

News of the loss of Apley Castle, and the plundering of Mr. Hanmer, its owner, to the amount of £1,500, was brought to Shrewsbury, and instantly Sir William Vaughan and Colonel Ellis were ordered out to retake it. On Sunday, March 24th, 1643-4, they got there and opened such a tempest of cannon shot that in less than an hour the defenders offered to surrender. Their terms were too high for Colonel Ellis, so he blocked up all the ways of escape with his cavalry, then led on his musketeers to the storm, and Apley Castle was soon in his power. In it were captured ten officers and seventy-three other prisoners, and a great store of arms, for it had been Mytton's intention to send a considerable number of soldiers from Wem to strengthen the garrison he had left there.

Foiled at Apley, and smarting under defeat, Mytton determined to try another quarter, so drew out all the forces he could get from Longford, Tong, Wem, and Stafford, in order to surprise or storm Lilleshall Abbey, then held for the King by Sir Richard Leveson. But Colonel Ellis and Sir William Vaughan had billeted for the night at Wellington, and hearing of Mytton's move, sent word to Lilleshall that Captain Bostock (the officer in command) should bring out his garrison to join with their troops. A collision between these united forces and Mytton occurred near Lilleshall, in which the Royalists were completely victorious, killing and wounding nearly two hundred of the enemy, among the latter Captain Timothy Turner, eldest son of the loyal Recorder of Shrewsbury, and taking prisoner five officers, forty troopers, and many privates of foot.

As soon as Rupert returned from Newark, he determined to reduce the Parliamentarian garrisons at Longford and Tong. The first he approached himself, and so great was the terror of his name that directly his herald advanced to the walls with the summons the garrison opened the gates and surrendered on the Prince's own terms.

The re-taking of Tong Castle, which had been wrested from the King in July, 1643, and had been "a great eye sore to his Maj.' good subjects who pass'd y^{t} road" ever since, was a longer affair. Its reduction was entrusted to Colonel Tyllier, but he was disturbed in the siege by a rebel force from Stafford, and apparently had to withdraw for a time and await reinforcements before he could succeed. This he did on Friday, April 26th, 1644.

A week earlier the castle of Brampton Brian, about half a mile from the county's southern border, had surrendered "at mercy only" to Ludlow's governor. In the last autumn it had successfully resisted a seven weeks' investment, Brilliana, Lady Harley, having bravely defended her home while her husband kept out of harm's way in London.

These successes encouraged the King's party to make another attempt on Wem. This time they did not try a direct assault, but quartered some two thousand troops in its vicinity to reduce it by starvation. It was, however, now so strongly fortified, and so well supplied with troops, ordnance, and provisions, and had such expert soldiers in Colonel Mytton and his deputy, Major William Goldegay, as Commanders, that there seemed no chance of success, and after a short time the enveloping forces were withdrawn.

In the beginning of June Prince Rupert was at Chester, and being short of ammunition sent to Oswestry for some. Mytton made an attempt to capture the convoy. Though he failed in his immediate enterprise, he learned from a prisoner the weakness of the garrison in the latter town. With him knowledge meant action, and that very evening, June 20th, he wrote to ask the Earl of Denbigh for additional men in order to attack Oswestry. Denbigh at once sent all he could spare from Stafford. These marched through Wem (picking up on the way Mytton's regiments stationed there) and Ellesmere, and reached Oswestry by 12 o'clock on Saturday, June 23rd. The cavalry were posted on every road to prevent escape, and then the infantry proceeded to storm the church, which stood outside the town walls, and was held as an outpost. After half-an-hour's fight an entrance was forced, whereupon the guard fled into the steeple, but were "fetched down with powder," and twenty-seven prisoners were made. Then a sacre was brought up, one of the town gates blown in, and, despite a certain amount of resistance from those inside, Denbigh entered at the head of his horse. On this the garrison took refuge in the castle. An attempt to fire the castle gates that evening with pitch proved a failure. Early next morning it was to be repeated, and as an officer went to perform this duty he was met by a party of women, who fell on their knees and addressed him piteously in Welsh. Obtaining an interpreter, he learned that they prayed that the castle should not be blown up till they had spoken to their husbands and children and the officers. Denbigh agreed to this, and offered mercy if they would surrender. Their conditions were not of a kind to be acceptable to him, so he ordered his men to go through with the attack. A young soldier named Cranage, being "well rewarded and well lined with sacke," was persuaded to hang a bomb on the castle gate. By creeping from house to house he managed to do so, and the explosion burst it open. Thereupon the garrison at once agreed to surrender on a promise of their lives only.

The Royalists lost no time in attempting to retake their lost fortress. Sir Fulke Hunkes, Governor of Shrewsbury, and Colonel Marrow, Deputy Governor of Chester, marched out with a considerable army, but traitors gave word to Colonel Mytton of its approach. He at once sent despatch riders to Sir Thomas Middleton for aid. Hunkes, pressing the siege vigorously, had recaptured the church before news reached him that Middleton, by forced marches, was drawing near with a large army. Marrow was thereupon ordered to intercept his advance at Whittington. Here the battle was bravely contested on both sides. "Three several times the skirmish was doubtful, each side being forced so often to retreat," reported Middleton himself. But his rearguard of foot at length came upon the scene of conflict, and turned the Royalists into hasty flight. Pursued to Felton Heath, their line of retreat was marked by arms, clothes, and provisions thrown aside to lighten their steeds for speedier pace.

On news of this disaster, Hunkes, to save his guns, ordered a retirement to Shrewsbury, and succeeded in reaching that town with slight loss. Denbigh on his part determined to push home this success, and ordering a general rendezvous on Knockin Heath, the next day "made a trial of Shrewsbury." Forcing the passage over Montford Bridge, and driving back its guard, he and Mytton got as far as the fort at Frankwell, but they found the outworks well defended, and when Colonel Marrow made a spirited sally with the remnant of his cavalry, were compelled to retreat with some loss.

On the very day of Hunkes' discomfiture at Oswestry the King's cause in the north was utterly ruined at Marston Moor, and Prince Rupert, who had drawn out all the troops he could get from Shropshire (thereby weakening every garrison), was completely defeated.

The next few months of 1644 saw many skirmishes between the contending forces, in which the King's troops generally came off second best. For instance, in August, Prince Rupert's own regiment of horse was surprised and cut up at Welshpool by Colonel Mytton from Oswestry, and in September the King's army (mainly picked troops drawn from Shrewsbury and Ludlow) were routed at Montgomery with a loss of 500 killed and between 1,200 and 1,500 prisoners.[1]

A new officer now came into Shropshire to help the Parliamentary Committee—Lieut.-Col. Reinkling, probably a foreign soldier of fortune—and henceforth whenever there was any desperate enterprise to be undertaken, or a forlorn hope to be led, we always read of him in the front rank.

Keeping an eye ever on Shrewsbury, the Committee considered the first step must be the capture of Moreton Corbet Castle. So on September 10th they entrusted the attempt to Lieut.-Colonel Reinkling from Wem and Lord Calvin from Stoke-on-Tern. A night attack was agreed upon. Reaching their destination at about 1.0 a.m., they posted their drummers a field's distance from the house with orders to sound the march as soon as the assault began; then Reinkling in a loud voice pretended to post such a regiment in one place and such a regiment in another, thus making the garrison believe that a very large force had come against them. Then the real attack began. The Lieut.-Colonel and four men managed to force a way in through a window. Those inside, misled by the darkness, and thinking that a large number had entered, instantly called for quarter, and before they discovered their mistake and attacked the gallant five, many more had come in. When morning dawned Reinkling and Calvin perceived how strongly the house was fortified, and declared they would never have attempted an assault if it had been daytime. Colonel Fenwicke was appointed Governor for the Parliament, and a little later "therein manfully withstood a sharp assault" of the Shrewsbury Royalists.

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[1] The terrible slaughter at the battle of Montgomery made a deep impression on the minds of the country folk, who for years believed that the ghosts of the dead haunted the battle-field. In the Diary of the Rev. Philip Henry we read:—"1661. Dec. 20 near Montgomery about Sunsett was seen by several p'sons a compleat body of horse marching two on a breast between 500 and 1000 in ye Road but no sign thereof visible upon ye ground the next morning: affirm'd upon Oath."

Prince Rupert, the nominal Commander-in-Chief, being so often absent from the county, Sir William Vaughan (who had been educated at Shrewsbury School, and had seen much service in Ireland) was about this time made General of Shropshire. His troops were principally Anglo-Irish, whom he quartered at Shrawardine, Caus, High Ercall, Lilleshall, and Dawley, now depleted of their former defenders by the Prince for service elsewhere. Shrawardine was chosen by Vaughan for headquarters, and by his energy he earned among his enemies the soubriquet of the "Devil of Shrawardine."

Mytton at Wem determined, if possible, to curb this activity as soon as he could, and hearing that it was his custom to attend the Holy Communion at the church outside the castle, came with a party of horse on Sunday, October 17th, and surprised Sir William and several other officers on their knees. Seizing him, Mytton declared he would shoot him with his own hand unless he instantly ordered the castle to be surrendered. As for dying, replied Vaughan, they could never find him better prepared; as for surrendering the castle, it was not in his power, for his deputy governor was now in command. Mytton, however, ordered him to be brought before the castle, and drawing a pistol threatened to shoot him dead in sight of the garrison unless they instantly opened the gates. But Vaughan, with a violent effort, wrenched himself free from his captors, and rushed towards the drawbridge

High Ercall Hall
KMR

shouting "shoot." His men thereupon opened such a hot fire from the walls that no pursuit was possible, though many muskets and pistols were discharged after him. Then the tables were turned, for a sally being made, Mytton lost five killed and nine taken before he could make good a retreat.

A similar Sunday arrest had taken place only a week before at Chirbury. The Vicar there, a man of pronounced Puritan opinions, on the taking of Montgomery Castle by his party in September, had begun the habit of preaching two disloyal sermons each Sunday. Captain Pelham Corbet, of Caus Castle, was content to look on as long as it was only one, but two were more than he could bear. He therefore sent a troop of horse, who, arresting the preacher in his pulpit, brought him prisoner to Caus; "and so," says the Chronicler, "the people were left without their pastor, to be without any sermon because they had not been content with one a day." [1]

The month of January, 1644-5, saw a new Commander-in-Chief for Shropshire in Prince Maurice, Rupert's brother, but far inferior to him in ability. He found the King's cause in very low condition, and all the attempts of his commission of array futile in raising fresh forces. At this time there were in the neighbourhood of Clun and Bishops Castle more than one thousand men in arms, "standing out against both sides, neither for the King nor for the Parliament, but only upon their own guard for the preservation of their lives and fortunes." These resolutely declined to take any part with the Prince. All efforts, also, to call out the *posse comitatus* of the county were useless. The garrison, too, of Shrewsbury, was in a state of mutiny, having received no pay for a long time. This latter state of affairs was well known to the Committee, who were only waiting for a convenient opportunity to take the town.

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[1] Sunday arrests seem to have been the usual thing in the case of loyal ministers; *e.g.*, Parliamentary "soldiers both horse and foot came upon the Lord's day from Nantwich to Whitchurch thinking to find the Rev. Thomas Orpe at church in the morning service, but missed him." William Holway, afterwards, at Middle, "was siezed on in the time of service by some fellows who presented their pistols at him and carried him away." "Laurence Seddon, Rector of Worthen, was draggedl uot of his pulpit and sent a prisoner to Shrewsbury, where he continued till the Royalist party made a reprisal of a Factious preacher, for whom he was exchanged." So Capt. Corbet was only following the custom of the other side.

Colonel Mytton's first attempt was on Saturday, February 8th, when he attacked the fort at Frankwell as the townsfolk were busy at market, but was repulsed with loss.

A few days later, Sir John Price, Governor of Montgomery Castle, hearing that the King's Commission for raising forces in Shropshire was sitting at Hinton, near Pontesbury, sent a flying column thither, captured the whole of them to the number of fifteen (including Sir F. Ottley,[1] the Royalist High Sheriff, Richard Fowler, of Harnage, and Roger Owen), and brought them to Montgomery.

A similar column was also, about February 16th, despatched from Wem to Apley Park, Bridgnorth, where Sir William Whitmore and his son Sir Thomas, with "divers other gentlemen of quality, and about 60 common soldiers," were surprised, and conveyed to Wem without interference, so secretly was the affair carried out.

In the meantime, Prince Maurice (who had reached his command on February 5th), thinking that after the repulse at Frankwell it would be safe to draw out a considerable part of the garrison to accompany him to Chester, did so on February 14th. His movements were well known through the instrumentality of the traitors in Shrewsbury, and the very evening after his departure Lieutenant-Colonel Reinkling, with Colonels Mytton,

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[1] The *Perfect Passages* of Feb. 19th to Feb. 25th, 1644-5, has a somewhat scurrilous description of this officer :"Sir Francis Oately that was the Governor of Shrewsbury and for his disservice to the Parliament made a knight since these warres, but of old was for his red-nose, and love to the pot known by the name of the Ale-conner.

Hunt, and Lloyd, and Captain Clive, marched from Wem to the attack. The night, however, proved so dark that, missing their way at the Old Heath, they proceeded towards Pimley and Atcham Bridge, and only found out their mistake when they had got too far to return to the attack on the town itself. Reinkling made the best of the situation, and took possession of the Bridge, and captured its garrison stationed in the church close by.

In no way disconcerted, the Committee determined on a third attempt. Elaborate arrangements were drawn up. Reinkling was again to be in supreme command; two thousand pounds were promised to the forces from Staffordshire and Cheshire, and a like sum to those of Shropshire, soldiers from the garrisons of Wem, Moreton Corbet, and Stoke-on-Tern, with special rewards for special acts of bravery; but if any soldier was guilty of plundering, he should lose his reward and be tried for his life by martial law.

The date fixed was Friday, February 21st, 1644-45, on which day they set out on their march in the evening, and, despite cold and darkness, reached Shrewsbury about four o'clock in the morning. Reinkling, with a small body of musketeers and some carpenters, obtained boats and rowed up the river to the palisades under the Castle. These they found already broken through from inside. For Mytton, in his Despatch, writes: "Mr. Huson, a minister which came out of Ireland with the enemy, and some three months since came from them to us, and Captain Willier likewise that came from the enemy about a month before, took axes and sledges and brake down the palisades and made way for our firelocks to enter." These two told the password and then guided Reinkling's musketeers and some dismounted troopers of Lieutenant Benbow under the Council House—residence of Sir William Owen—and into the town. The gate at Castle Foregate was opened, and the rest of the army entered. There was a skirmish in the Market Place, where the main guard made some resistance and killed two of Mytton's horses, but surrendered on the fall of their captain. The Castle held out for a few hours after the taking of the town itself, but then capitulated on the cowardly conditions that the English soldiers should leave their arms and have passes to Ludlow, but the Irish should "looke thorow a Hempen window" (*i.e.*, be hanged). "Which," reported Mytton, "is performed."[1] The men in the fort at Frankwell continued to resist till the evening, and then surrendered "upon bare quarter of their lives." Though the Committee did their best to prevent pillage, at least as far as well-wishers to their cause were concerned, several tradesmen were ruined by the destruction of their goods. Very little blood was shed, the casualty list of killed being Captain Needham and five Royalist soldiers, with only two of Mytton's men. The prisoners comprised eight baronets and knights, forty officers, two hundred soldiers (including many Irish), fifteen guns, two thousand stands of arms, one hundred barrels of powder, and money and plate to the value of forty thousand pounds, with a considerable quantity of other goods and treasure sent there for safety. Captain Crowe, Commandant of the Castle, managed to escape to Gloucester, where, however, he was put on trial and hanged, either for treachery or cowardice.

While Lancashire is still proud of Latham House and the Countess of Derby, Hereford of Brampton Brian and Lady Harley, and the Isle of Wight of Carisbrook Castle and the Countess of Portland, it seems that Shropshire also had its heroic lady commander, for Rowton Castle is said to have been gallantly defended by Lady Lister for a fortnight after her husband had been captured at the taking of Shrewsbury, till Mytton gave her honourable terms of surrender.[2]

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[1] Gough (p. 41) and Clarendon (vol. ii., pt. ii. p. 818) tell the story of Rupert's retaliation, but there is no room to give it here.

[2] The late Rev. G. W. Fisher, *Annals of Shrewsbury School*, p. 153.

The loss of Shrewsbury was the greatest blow which had yet fallen on the Royal cause in Shropshire, and one immediate result was that Prince Maurice felt compelled to withdraw the soldiers from most of the smaller garrisons. Among others, he abandoned and rendered incapable of defence the castles of Broncroft, Hoigate, Rouse,[1] and Tong, with Lea Hall and Madeley House. Moreton Corbet Castle was at the same time dismantled by the Committee lest it should be seized again by the King's party, and because, with the county town in their hands, it was of no further use to them.

As a small set off against all these disasters, the Royalists won a victory on March 18th at Knockin Heath, where Sir Edmund Cary defeated a strong party of horse and foot under Sir Thomas Middleton, whose loss in killed included a major, a lieutenant, a cornet, and many common soldiers; in prisoners, two captains and twenty-eight privates. They were also successful at High Ercall.

Encouraged by the capture of Shrewsbury, the Parliamentarians made a determined attempt on the manor-house of Lord Newport, at Ercall, and suffered an undoubted repulse; for after Middleton had besieged it for seventeen days (for four of which he played upon it unceasingly with his great guns), and had made five assaults on the works, the besieged, under Sir Vincent Corbet, Col. Thomas Corbet, and Capt. Armourer, the Governor, made a sally, captured their ordnance—"three great pieces and a mortar piece," and inflicted such loss in killed and wounded that the assailants retired precipitately.

Ludlow was attacked on April 24th by Colonel Birch, Governor of Hereford, but he, as Sir William Waller before him, found the place too strong to carry by storm, and after a short attempted siege thought it wiser to retire than wait for Princes Rupert and Maurice, who were advancing to the town's relief with all their available forces.

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[1] I have been unable to identify and locate this Castle of Rouse.

In May Charles I. paid a hurried visit to the county on his way from his winter quarters at Oxford to Chester, with about 11,000 men. On Saturday, the 17th, he marched through Tong and Newport to Chetwynd, where he stayed till Tuesday. Thence he journeyed to Market Drayton. During the halt here an attempt was made under General Langdale to surprise Wem, at that date slenderly garrisoned, but it resulted in total failure, owing to tardy marching. On Thursday the Royal army left the county on the road which ended on June 14th in the complete reverse at Naseby.

News of this total defeat reaching the Committee for Shropshire, they began to bestir themselves, and to attempt at once the reduction of the smaller royal garrisons. With this intent Lieut.-Colonel Reinkling and Colonel Mackworth, with 800 men, were despatched southward to capture Stokesay, then held for the King, and to repair and re-fortify Broncroft, slighted by Maurice after the fall of Shrewsbury, and so to cut off Ludlow from the rich dales of Stretton and Corve, and starve out the town which Waller and Birch had failed to take. In both these purposes they were successful, despite the attack of a large force under Sir Lewis Kirke, Governor of Ludlow, who was defeated at Norton, near Stokesay, with the loss of four pieces of ordnance, 400 stand of arms, and 300 prisoners.

While all this was being enacted in the south, Colonel Hunt, from Shrewsbury, marched against Caus Castle, and after an investment of twelve days compelled it to capitulate on June 23rd. Then he turned his attention to Shrawardine Castle, which, on June 29th, "was cowardly surrendered up to the Parliament forces under the command of Colonel Hunt, Colonel Lloyd, and Mr. Charlton, after five dayes seige."[1]

Elated by these successes, a second attempt was made on High Ercall Manor House, but again disaster followed, for Sir William Vaughan (smarting no doubt under the loss of Shrawardine, taken while he was away with the King) made a sudden onslaught on the besiegers' lines, killed about 100, took nearly 400 prisoners, including Colonel Reinkling, with all the baggage, and totally routed the rest.

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[1] Shrawardine Register.

In July Lieut.-General Cromwell himself paid a flying visit to Shropshire, and while "viewing ye town of Bridgnorth," had a very narrow escape of his life; for on Friday, the 11th, as he sat on horseback talking with a cornet of his regiment, the latter was struck by a brace of musket balls and mortally wounded.[1] Even under this General's direction the investment was not pressed home, for the besieging troops were withdrawn when the news arrived that the King was marching towards North Wales with a considerable army in order to relieve Chester. He reached Ludlow on August 7th, where he tried, but in vain, to raise fresh forces: the country had grown weary of war. The next day he proceeded to Bridgnorth, which town he left on the 10th for Lichfield.

Directly he had gone the Parliamentary Committee ordered an attack on Lilleshall, which was taken after a short siege by soldiers under Major Braine. Then the garrison of Dawley Castle in despair evacuated and dismantled their charge, and retired to High Ercall.

To illustrate the recent successes of the Parliament, we will quote from the *Perfect Occurrences* of Friday, August 20th, to Friday, August 27th, 1645:—

> A lyst of the Garrisons taken by the Shropshire Committee since they first took the field:—Oswestry Castle, Shrawardine Castle, Rowton Castle, Caus Castle, Lee House, Stoaksay, Broncroft, Benthall, Buildwas, Maydley, Tong Castle, Lalpey [*i.e.*, Lapley, co. Stafford], Dawley, Lilleshall, Morton Corbet, Albright Hussey, Atcham Bridge, Longner House, Rocksalter [*i.e.*, Wroxeter], Shrewsbury. Twenty Garrisons they have

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[1] This is the only authentic visit the great Protector paid to Shropshire during the First Civil War, though local tradition connects him with innumerable places in the county, especially in reference to the injury or destruction of churches, castles, and manor houses.

taken first and last from the King with those two of Lilleshall and Dawley which they took last week. So now the King hath no more garrisons than Ludlow, Bridgnorth and High Ercall.

His Majesty was soon again in Shropshire, for, retreating South after his total defeat at Rowton Heath, near Chester, on September 24th, he reached Bridgnorth on the 30th, but only stayed two days, and then moved on to Lichfield. A fortnight later he made up his mind to surrender to the Scots.

After this the Royal cause was hopeless. Though Lord Asteley and Sir William Vaughan tried hard to collect a fresh army, they found it impossible, and overtaken by Sir William Brereton at Stow-in-the-Wold, Gloucestershire, they suffered a disastrous defeat, and the last force which remained to the King was scattered.

The three Royal garrisons in Shropshire held out a little longer, but High Ercall, battered for nine hours without intermission by great shot and grenadoes, surrendered on fair terms on March 27th, 1646.

Then no time was lost in storming Bridgnorth. The day after High Ercall fell, a strong brigade was despatched thither from Shrewsbury. Failing in an attempted surprise, the town was assaulted in three divisions. Each met with a determined resistance, but Colonel Francis Billingsley, of the Trained Bands, being killed in St. Leonard's Churchyard, the Royalists were at length forced back into the castle. This they managed to hold for three weeks, despite a continued bombardment, for the enemy's cannon, though playing furiously against its walls, could make no breach or considerable impression. To return the fire the garrison planted great guns upon the tower of St. Mary Magdalene's Church (which, being high, commanded all the enemy's works), and by this battery inflicted great loss, on one occasion the artillerymen in the tower sending a lucky shot right into the mouth of one of the opposing cannon, which not only burst the piece, but killed its gunner and six or seven of his men by the explosion. Understanding, however, that the castle magazine was in the chancel of this church, the besiegers began to run a sap through the rock, and carried it within a few paces of the ammunition.[1] In danger, therefore, of being blown up, Sir Robert Howard, the Governor, agreed to honourable conditions on April 24th, 1646. Among the commanders in the garrison were Sir Vincent Corbet, Sir Edward Acton, and Sir Francis Ottley, who were allowed to keep their arms, baggage, and horses. All the other officers and men received similar liberal terms, with the exception of Mr. Edward Latham, Colonel Billingsley's father-in-law, who "must deliver himself up to the mercy of the Parliament."

Ludlow, the last of the King's garrisons in Shropshire, kept its colours flying for another month, though closely invested by Colonel Birch from Hereford, and Colonel Mackworth from Shrewsbury, who, despairing of capture by assault, made tempting offers and bribes to certain members of the garrison to induce their comrades to surrender. And this was effected on June 1st, 1646.

With the fall of Ludlow, the first Civil War was at an end as far as this county was concerned, and all that remained was to count up the losses it had occasioned.

It is impossible to say how many Salopians laid down their lives in the struggle. Gough says that of the twenty from Middle who enlisted in the Royal army thirteen were killed; probably a higher proportion than in other villages, yet each of them, no doubt, furnished its quota to the grim list of slain.

Of castles and manor houses numbers were in ruins, Shrawardine, Caus, Rowton, and Bridgnorth utterly destroyed. Of churches, Clun, Bishops Castle, Benthall, Stokesay, Shrawardine, and St. Leonard's, Bridgnorth, had been practically demolished; High Ercall, Loppington, Oswestry, Wellington, the Abbey, Shrewsbury, and many others greatly damaged.

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[1] This mine is still to be seen, and is now called Levingston's Hole.

Various estates changed hands. Sir Vincent Corbet was so impoverished by the fines imposed by Parliament that he was compelled to sell his property at Moreton Corbet and Preston Brockhurst; his cousin, also Vincent Corbet, to surrender Humphreston (in the early days of the war garrisoned for the King) to Edmund Waring, the Anabaptist High Sheriff and Governor of Shrewsbury; John Heylin to part with Alderton, purchased by the strong Parliamentarian, John Wingfield, and so on through the county. £46,631 14s. 8d. is given as the total at which the estates of Shropshire Royalists were compounded for, with annual payments of £990 in addition.

In the second Civil War of 1648, in the campaign of 1651 (which culminated in Cromwell's "crowning mercy at Worcester" and the flight of Charles II. to Boscobel), in the rising of 1655, and in that of 1659, Shropshire men took their full share in the vain attempts to give the King his own again. And nowhere was the Restoration more welcome than in this county, when, as the Rector of Shrawardine entered in his Church Register:—

> 1660. 29 May, His Gracious Majesty, our dread Sovereign King Charles the Second, came to London attended with the greatest part of the Nobilitie and Gentrye of the land, where with all demonstrations of joy he was welcomed and received. Never was more cordial love and honour showed to any King than was to this exiled prince at his reception into the kingdom in all places.

JOHN ERNEST AUDEN.

OLD SHROPSHIRE FAMILIES
CHANGES IN LAND OWNERSHIP[1]

BY STANLEY LEIGHTON, M.P., F.S.A.

"TEMPORA mutantur nos et mutamur in illis." Four hundred years ago, towards the close of the Feudal period, when Leland wrote his *Itinerary*, red deer and roe were running wild over the Forest of Clun. On the slopes of the Stiperstones range, before modern miners had recommenced the work of their Roman predecessors, Hockstow deer-forest extended right up to Caus Castle. The antlers found in the meres round Baschurch and Ellesmere show the presence of red deer in North Shropshire also. What was the population of the county in the Feudal period we cannot accurately ascertain, but the inhabitants of the Border country were not scattered, as now, broadcast over the land, but were gathered together for protection in the walled towns or in villages which nestled under the battlements of castles. Few were the outlying residences, and these were usually surrounded by a moat. Contrasting with the wildness of the surrounding scenery (for there was then no model farming) some forty or fifty castles gave point to the landscape, some of them well built, and covering several acres in extent, but more imposing than the strongholds of the landowners in scale and stateliness were the abbeys of the religious orders, of which Shropshire had her fair proportion. Eyton gives the following list of Shropshire castles:—

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[1] This chapter was originally read before the Royal Archæological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland at their meeting in Shrewsbury in 1894, on which occasion its author was President of one of the sections. Mr. Stanley Leighton was pre-eminently qualified to speak on the subject it deals with, not only by his position in the county, but by the special attention he had for many years devoted to that branch of Salopian antiquities. The chapter is now in the main reprinted from the *Transactions of the Shropshire Archæological Society*, to which, after its delivery, he contributed it in a revised form; but for the purpose of reprinting, it has been again edited and brought up to date by his daughter, Miss Rachel Leighton, who has herself devoted considerable attention to the subject.—T.A.

Alberbury.
Bishop's Castle.
Bridgnorth.
Carrechova.
Caus.
Cleobury Mortimer.
Corfham.
Ellesmere.
Holgate.
Kinnerley.
Knockin.
Ludlow.
Middle.
Oswestry.
Pulverbatch.
Quatford.
Red Castle.
Ruyton-XI.-Towns.
Shrawardine.
Shrewsbury.
Snead.
Stretton.
Wattlesborough.
Wem.
Whitchurch.
Whittington.

Modern research has also revealed the existence of a stronghold at Hodnet.

The castellated mansions mentioned by Eyton are:—

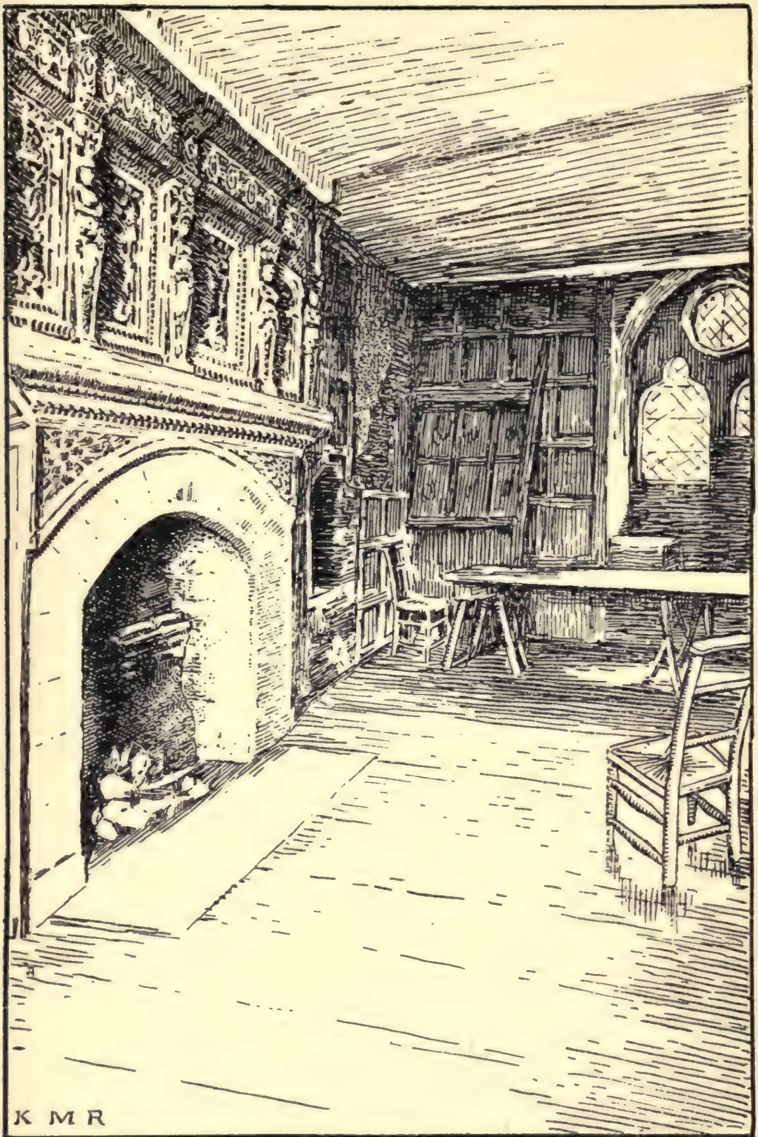
Acton Burnell.
Apley.
Brace Meole.
Charlton.
Cheswardine.
Dawley.
Hopton.
Longnor.
Moreton Corbet.
Stokesay.
Tirley.
Withyford.
Wroxeter.

The Religious houses, as given in Stevens' Continuation of Dugdale's *Monasticon*, were:—

Shrewsbury Abbey—Benedictine.
Wenlock Priory—Cluniac.
Halesowen—Præmonstratensian.
Haughmond—Augustinian.
Lilleshall—Augustinian.
Buildwas—Cistercian.
Chirbury—Augustinian.
Wombridge—Augustinian.
Brewood (Whiteladies)—Cistercian.

To which may be added Alberbury, suppressed by Henry VI. as an alien Priory of the Grandmontensian Order, and the Houses of the Knights of St. John at Halston and Lydley Heys. The Abbots of Shrewsbury, Lilleshall, and Haughmond were summoned to the House of Peers from time to time.

The nett income of the religious houses at the



THE SOLAR ROOM. *Stokesay Castle*

Dissolution varied from the £532 of Shrewsbury Abbey to the £17 of the Convent of Whiteladies.

An honest study of what remains to us of the past helps us to observe the continuity of change, both in the outward appearance of the land and the personality of its inhabitants. The Abbeys and Priories of Shropshire just mentioned, the houses of the military orders, and a number of Friaries, are all gone. The forty castles of Shropshire are all gone as residences of importance. I can only recall three or four which have a vestige of roof left upon their walls. Stokesay is a beautiful but dismantled shell. Shrewsbury Castle, of which Leland said "it hath been a strong thinge, but is now much in ruin," suffered still further disfigurement in the beginning of the nineteenth century at the hands of Laura, Countess of Bath, and her architect Telford, the famous road engineer. Wattlesborough is used as a farmhouse, and its square Norman tower is covered with a modern roof. Apley Castle is used as a stable, and little but the foundation is left. Broncroft has been modernised. Of the four walled towns of Shropshire—Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Oswestry—only a few vestiges of gate or wall can be traced. The original owners have passed away with their castles. Compare the feudal baronage of Shropshire with its modern peerage: Fitzalan, Audeley, Boteler, Burnel, Charlton de Powys, Corbet of Caus, Fitz-Herbert, Fitz-Warin, Lacy, Mortimer, Pantulf, Say, Stafford, Strange, Montgomery. All these once famous names are unfamiliar now. Of the Peerage of Shropshire in the reign of Henry VIII., the Dukedom of Buckingham became extinct in 1521, and the Barony of Stafford in 1637. The Fitzalan Earls of Arundel became extinct in the male line in 1580. The Barons Grey de Powis died out in 1552; the Baronies of Talbot, Furnival, and Strange of Blackmere, fell into abeyance between three daughters and co-heirs in 1616, and only a small portion of the

Shropshire estates remained attached afterwards to the Earldom of Shrewsbury. Of the Peerage of Shropshire in the reign of George I., the line of the Newports, Earls of Bradford, became extinct in 1762, and that of the Herberts, Marquises of Powis, in 1748; of the Pierpoints, Dukes of Kingston, in 1773; and of the Talbots, Dukes of Shrewsbury, in 1718, when the Earldom reverted to a kinsman.

When Noel Hill, the eldest son of Thomas Harwood, was created Lord Berwick of Attingham in 1784, he was the only resident peer in the county. There were, indeed, two Irish peers—Kilmorey and Clive, but, as far as I know, no resident English peer, unless Earl Gower of Lilleshall be counted.

In the reign of Queen Victoria the peerage of Shropshire included:—

Noel Hill of Attingham—Baron Berwick, created 1784.
Clive.—Irish Barony of Clive, created 1762; Baron Herbert, created 1794; and Earl of Powis, created 1804.
Bridgeman.—Created Baron 1794, Earl of Bradford 1815.
Hill of Hawkestone.—Created Baron 1816, Viscount 1842.
Forester.—Created Baron 1821.
Wilson, Baroness Berners.—Barony called out of abeyance 1832.
Lawley.—Baron Wenlock, created 1839.
Windsor Clive.—Barony called out of abeyance 1855 (created Earl of Plymouth 1905).
Hamilton Russell.—Viscount Boyne, Baron Brancepeth created 1866.
Acton.—Baron created 1869.
Gore.—Baron Harlech created 1876.
Hill-Trevor.—Baron Trevor created 1880.
Lowry-Corry.—Baron Rowton, created 1880 (extinct 1904).

The following Peers have land in Shropshire, but are not resident:—

The Earl of Shrewsbury.
Earl of Tankerville.
Earl Brownlow.
Duke of Norfolk.
Earl Craven.
Earl of Dartmouth.
Duke of Sutherland.
Marquis of Bath.
Lord Barnard.
Lord Kenyon.
Lord Stafford.

From these lists it may be observed how short has been the family tenure of hereditary rank.

But ruins and dismantled houses each have their own story to tell, which will generally repay the trouble of discovery. Stokesay points to the rise of commerce—one of the powerful factors in England's greatness. Its builder was Laurence, a clothier of Ludlow, who erected this charming castellated mansion in 1290. "It was not," says Eyton, "till the reign of Edward I. that mercantile wealth could readily be exchanged for territorial importance." After passing by heirship to the Vernons, Stokesay again fell into mercantile hands, and was purchased in the reign of Elizabeth or James I. by the aldermanic family of Craven, who sold it about 1870, again for money made in business, to the family of Allcroft, its present owners. In feudal, as well as in modern, times wealth often came through heiresses, and there are few families with large possessions which do not owe much to female inheritance—a fact which, I suppose, inspired the old punning legal rhyme:

Fee simple, simple fee,
And all the fees in tail,
Are nothing when compared with thee,
Thou best of Fees, Fe(e)male.

Whether the duties and the dangers of feudal superiority brought its possessors more quickly to extinction than the conditions of modern pre-eminence is a problem worthy of consideration. Special advantages, whether social, political, pecuniary, or literary, seem perilous to the envied owners. Eyton concludes a notice of the Fitzalans with these words: "Having now given some account of eight successive representatives of Alan FitzFlaad, this retrospective observation suggests itself, viz.: that not one of these eight Fitzalans attained the age of sixty years; only two passed the age of fifty; three died between forty and fifty; one between thirty and forty; and two others died under thirty." The fate of the Staffords, who inherited Caus Castle from the Corbets, and, having inter-married with the Plantagenets, stepped into the highest grade of nobility, is equally instructive. In the second generation Edmund, the fifth Earl, having succeeded a brother who was murdered, and two other brothers who died childless, was himself killed at the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403. His son, who was made Duke of Buckingham, was slain at Northampton in 1460. His son was slain at St. Albans. His son was beheaded at Salisbury in 1483, and his son was beheaded on Tower Hill in 1521. The Royal House of England for the last eight centuries has been represented by seven families, but never during all that time by a purely English dynasty in the male line. The Conqueror William was a Norman; Stephen, a Frenchman; Henry II., an Angevin or Plantagenet; Henry VII., a Welshman or Tudor; James I., a Scotchman or Stuart; William III., a Dutchman of the House of Orange; George I., a Guelph or Hanoverian; and the present King represents the distinguished German house of Coburg.

The feudal scheme of society, the outgrowth of surrounding circumstances rather than of settled policy, linked enormous duties with corresponding position. Recognised and customary obligations, which could not easily or safely be avoided, appertained to the ownership of land, almost the only form in which at that time wealth could be capitalised. There is danger to any state when the conditions of political service dissociate property from public responsibilities. In old England the Castle represented military duty; the Abbey represented religious, educational, and civil obligations; the Towns, with their exclusive guilds and chartered privileges, were the guardians of municipal government and the protectors of trade. The custom of primogeniture, economical in its primary idea, is democratic in its direct consequences. While the eldest son of a baronial house was endowed with the land, almost to the exclusion of his brethren, he was at the same time laden with specific military and civil responsibilities. The cadets of the house, equally noble in blood, but according to our English custom simply commoners, were obliged by the necessities of their position to seek a livelihood in trades or professions. There was no caste, and as the ranks of the barons and knights were ever and anon recruited from the professional and mercantile classes, so the trades and professions were as often recruited from the younger sons of the nobility. In the great Council of the nation the bishops and abbots were life peers, as numerous and influential as the hereditary nobility, and they were summoned by a similar writ. Whether a summons was regarded as a burden or a privilege is not quite clear, nor is it certain by what means an ecclesiastical or lay peer could assert his right if he failed to receive his summons. Certain it is that the abbots of many religious houses, as well as the owners of land by baronial tenure, were sometimes summoned and sometimes passed over. The lesser landowners were represented by knights of the shire in the House of Commons, and the citizens of the town by burgesses. Shropshire returned two knights of the shire, and Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth two burgesses each from 1295. In 1472 Ludlow was made a Parliamentary Borough, Wenlock in 1478, Bishop's Castle in 1585, so that the county returned in all twelve members to Parliament, instead of its present quota of five. What a shrinkage of relative importance in the council of the nation!

It will be remembered that the delimitation of the boundary between England and Wales was not finally completed till the twenty-eighth year of Henry VIII. A statute passed in 1537 introduced the shire system into what are now the counties of Brecknock, Radnor, Montgomery, Denbigh, and Flint. The parishes of Ellesmere, Oswestry, Chirbury, Clun, and others, were definitely appropriated to Shropshire. I give here some extracts from Leland's *Itinerary:*

> Limites of Shropshire
>
> Blakemere a very large parke nye to White-Chirche, ys (as I have harde say) yn sum parte a limes betwixte Shropshire and Chestershire. In the Parke is a fair Maner Place.
>
> Monkbridge, a Mile beneth Tembyri is (as I her herd say) a limes to Wicestershire, Shropshire, and Herefordshire.

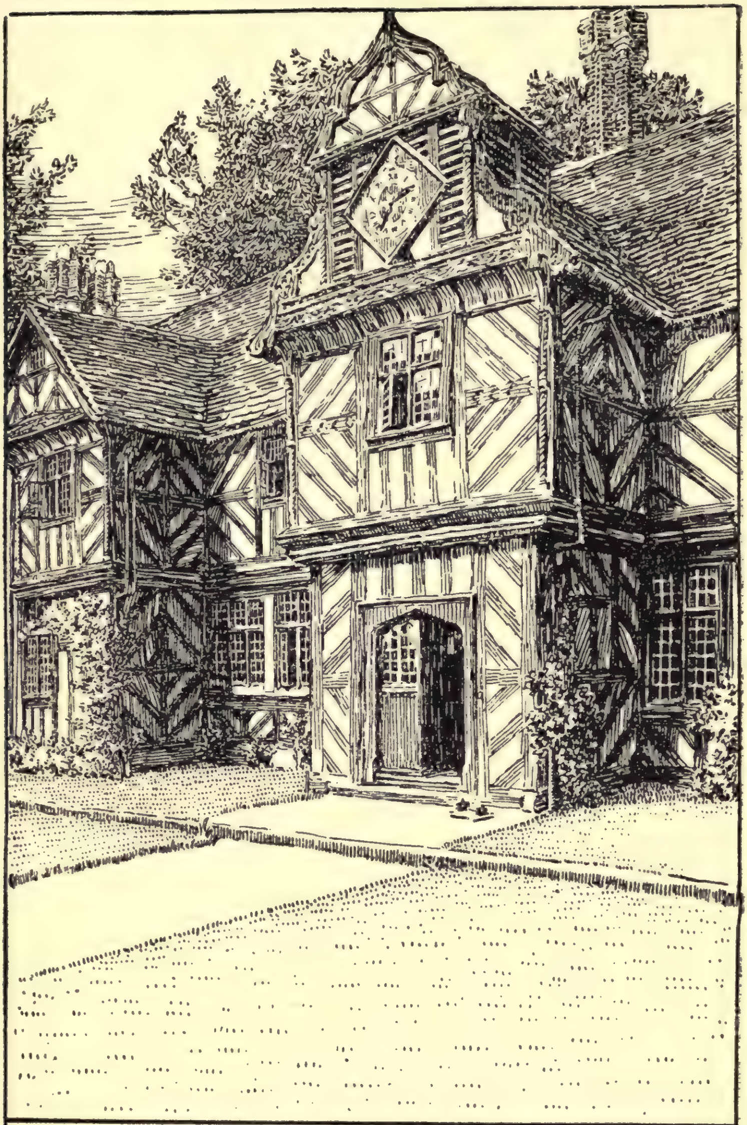
Under "Montgomeryshire," Leland writes:

> Clune Castell longynge to the Erle of Arundel, somewhat ruinous. It hath been both stronge and well builded. Clune was a lordship marched by itself afore the new Acte. By Clune is a great Forest of redde Dere and Roois longinge to the Lord of Arundell, and standinge in the Lordshipe of Temecetre, thrwghe the whiche Teme Ryver cummethe longinge also to the Lord of Arundle. All Chirbyri Hundred by the new Acte is adjecte to Shrobbshire. It apperithe in the Acte what Lordshippes be adjoyned to the V new Shires.

I may note here that the Castle of Clun has been purchased by the present Duke of Norfolk, and thus a descendant of the famous Shropshire family of Fitzalan, and the holder of the feudal barony of Clun and Oswaldstree, is again a Shropshire landowner.

Leland gives a list of twenty-nine Shropshire landowners in his day, and in twenty cases he adds an estimate of their incomes:

Sir John Talbot, of Albrighton Park.
Corbet of Moreton Corbet, 800 merk of land = £520.
Corbet of Lee, 100 merk = £66.
Corbet of Longnor, £40.
Sir John Mainwaring, of Ightfield.
John Dodd, of Cloverley, 100 merk = £66.



PITCHFORD HALL :

Sir Robert Needham, 400 merk=£266.
Grosvenor of Bellaport.
Newport of Ercall, a lordship with Park, £200.
Leighton of Leighton.
Leighton of Wattlesborough.
Leighton of Plash.
Leighton of Rodington.
Mitton of Coton, near Shrewsbury, £133.
Trentham of Shrewsbury, £50.
Thornes of Shrewsbury, £50.
Onslow of Onslow, £40.
Oteley of Pitchford, £100.
Scriven of Frodesley, 100 merk of land=£66.
Leigh of Langley, £100.
Laken of Willey, 300 merks=£200.
Gatacre of Gatacre, 100 merks=£66.
Wolrich of Dudmaston, 100 merks=£66.
Haughton of Beckbury, £40.
Yonge of Caynton, 100 merks=£66.
Vernon of Hodnet, 200 merks=£132.
Cotton of Cotton, £50.
Charlton of Apley.
Charlton of Wombridge.

Among the other names to be found in Leland's *Itinerary* are:

One Brooke, a lawyer, of Church Stretton.
Lord Powis (*i.e.*, Grey de Powis).
Francis, Earl of Shrewsbury.
The Duke of Buckingham, of Caus Castle.
Earl of Arundel.
Earl of Derby (as owner of land through the Lords Strange of Knockin).
Sandford of Sandford.
Vernon of Stokesay.
The Baron of Burford.
Rowland Hill, merchant, of London.
Mr. John Dudley.
Mr. Cornwall.
"Arthur Newton hath almost made away all his landes."

Comparing Leland's list with the modern *Domesday Book* of 1873, I can find only six of the same names; while the comparison of incomes shows the enormous relative depreciation in the value of money. In 1873 three Shropshire landowners are credited with over £30,000, two with over £20,000, eight with over £10,000, twenty-seven with over £5,000, 164 with more than £1,000.

I pass now to another standard by which we may measure the progress of change. Christopher Saxton's Elizabethan map of Shropshire marks twenty-four parks, not probably all deer parks, but fenced enclosures used for cattle as well as game, and in all cases indicating a residence of importance:

Adderley.
Blackmere.
Cardiston.
Cheswardine.
Cleobury.
Haughmond.
High Ercall.
Hodnet.
Kenwick.
Langley.
Lilleshall.
Oakley.
Oteley.
Pepperhill.
Plash.
Shavington.
Shawbury.
Shelvock.
Shrawardine.
Staunton.
Tong.
Upton.
Willey.

To which list Speed adds Dean (near Ludlow), Stokesay, Shifnal, Linley (near Bridgnorth), and Ightfield.

There were in 1895, I think, ten deer parks in Shropshire, but only one, Oteley, near Ellesmere, which I think was disparked at one time, is identical with any in Saxton's list. Eight, however, of his parks are still represented by mansions. Between the reigns of Elizabeth and Victoria several new parks were made and have since been disparked. Emmanuel Bowen's map (1751) marks the following:

Tong Castle.—Duke of Kingston.
Pepperhill.—Earl of Shrewsbury.
Shefnal.—Earl of Stafford.
High Arcol, and Eyton.—Earl of Bradford.
Oakley Park.—Earl of Powis.
Shenton Place.—Lord Kilmorey.
Halesowen.—Lord Dudley.
Haughton.—Briggs, Bart.
Aldenham.—Acton, Bart.
Hawkston.—Hill, Bart.
Longnor.—Corbet, Bart.
Harnage Grange.—Fowler, Bart.
Wattlesborough.—Leighton, Bart.

Halston.—Mytton, Esq.
Morton Corbet.—Corbet, Esq.
Borreatton.—Hunt, Esq.
Morvil.—Weaver, Esq.
Willey.—Forester, Esq.
Apley.—Whitmore, Esq.
Condover.—Barnston, Esq.
Porkington.—Owen, Esq.
Park Hall.—Charlton, Esq.
Aston.—Lloyd, Esq.
West Coppice and Onslow.—Powis, Esq.
Chetwyn.—Piggot, Esq.
Linley.—More, Esq.

The map of Basil Wood of the White Abbey is also useful. It was made about the year 1715, and professes to mark the country houses in the county, and in the margin are the names and the arms of two hundred owners. This map is not exhaustive of the subject, and there are mistakes as well as omissions. Nevertheless, it is astonishing to notice how many of the two hundred names enumerated have disappeared and how many new names and houses have sprung up in the interval. For instance, neither Hawkestone nor Attingham appear in this map, and three-fourths of the families whose names and arms are recorded are no longer represented in the male descent. The list is as follows[1]:

Acton, Bart.
Acton
Adams
Adams
Andrews
Astley, Bart.
Baldwin
(*now Childe*)
Baldwin
Baldwin
Bentall
Berrington
Biggs
Bird
Blount, Bart.
Boteville
Boycott
Bradford, Earl of
Bridgeman, Bart.
Briggs, Bart.
Briggs
Brown
Brown
Burton
Calcott
Cartwright
Charleton, Bart.
Charleton
Charleton
Chetwood, Bart.
Church
Clayton
Clough
Clyve
Coats
Cole
Corbet, Bart.
Corbet
Corbet
Corbet
Cornwell
Cotton
Cressett
Davies
Delves, Bart.
Donne
Edwards
Edwards

---

[1] Those whose names are printed in italics have disappeared in the male line, or have sold their estates. The test adopted is whether the name is now to be found in Burke's *Landed Gentry*.

Eyton
Finch
Fleetwood
Forester, Kt.
Fowler, Bart.
Fowns
Fox
Gardner
Gosnell
Grant
Grosvenor
Hanmer
Hanmer
Harnadge
Harris
Harris
Harwood
Haynes
Haynes
Hayward
Herbert
Hibbins
Hill
Hill
Holland
Holland
Hollings
Hopton
Hosier
Hunt
Ireland
Jenkin
Jenks
Jobber
Jones
Jones
Jones
Karver
Kinardsley
Kinaston
Kinaston
Lacon
Langley
Langley
Langley
Lea
Leighton, Bart.
Lister
Littleton
Littleton
Llewellin
Lloyd, Bart.
Lloyd
Lloyd
Lloyd
Lutley
Mackworth
Mainwaring
(*of Ightfield*)
Middleton
Minshull
Moore
Mostin
Mytton
Mytton
Newport, Lord
Newton
Pulley
Oakley
Ottley
Ottley
Owen
Owen
Parke
Phillips
Phillips
Plowden
Pope
Powell
Powis
Powis
Powis, Earl of
Presland
Price
Prynce
Pugh
Pygott
Ridley
Scarlett
Scott
Scott
Severn
Shepheard
Skrimshire
Stanier
Wale (*or Waley*)
Ward
Weald
White
Whitmore
Wingfield
Wooldridge, Bart.
Yates
Young

Additional names:—

Acton
Acton
Aron
Baugh
Bendy
Botterill
Briggs
Brooks
Child, Kt.
Gibbon
Griffiths
Griffiths
Jedd
Jones
Langley
Lea
Mirrick
Moore
Moseley
Muckleston
Newton
Owen
Owen
Pierpoint, Lord
Powell
Prince
Revell
Shrewsbury,
Duke of
Slaney
Smallman
Smith
Soley
Spratt
Taylure
Vaughan
Walker
Wallcott
Waring
Waring
Weaver
Weld
Wilbraham
Williams, Bart.
(now Williams-Wynne)
Wylde

In Kelly's *Directory of Shropshire* for 1905 will be found a list of the principal seats in Shropshire. It mentions 231, which the reader may compare with Basil Wood's.

The names of those who during the troubled period of the Civil War took part on one side or the other prove that the Rebellion was a struggle, not of class against class, as was the French Revolution, but of the supporters of one theory of Government and Religion against the supporters of another. Amongst those who in Shropshire favoured the Parliamentary side are to be found:

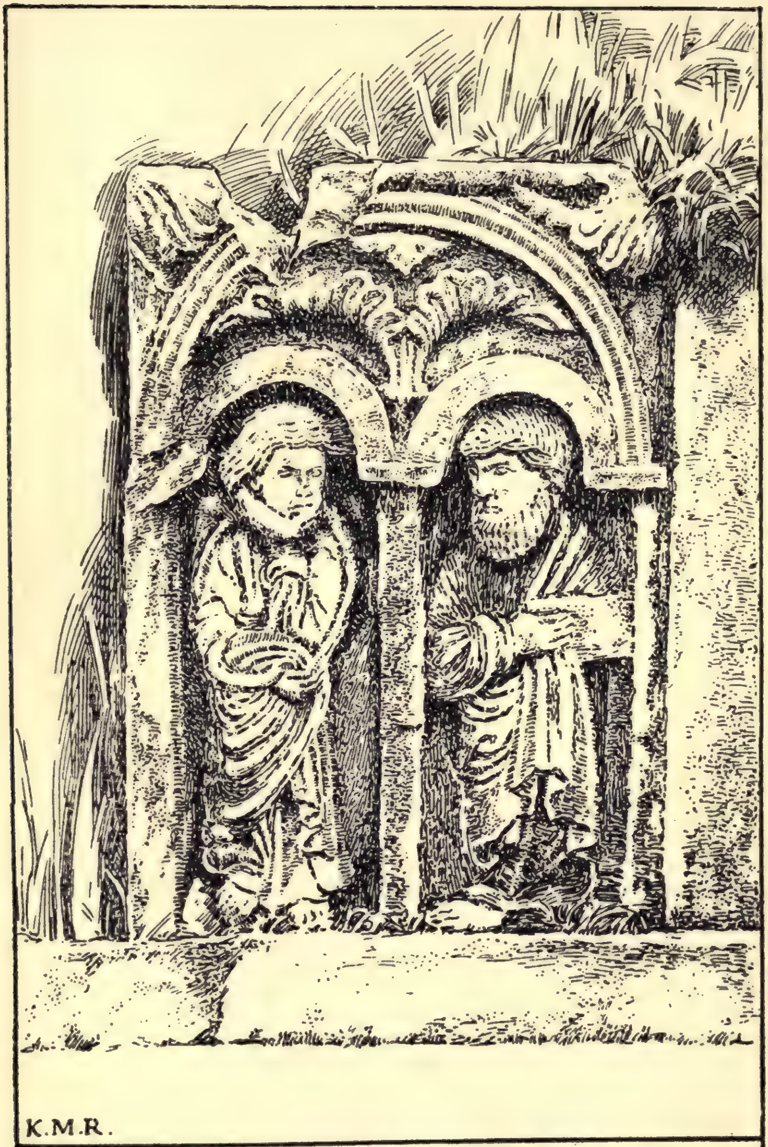
The Earl of Bridgewater, President of the Court of the Marches and a patron of Richard Baxter; the Earl of Denbigh, General Mytton of Halston and his brother-in-law, Myddelton of Chirk Castle; Corbet of Adderley, Corbet of Stanwardine, Cotton of Bellaport, Forester, Matthew Herbert of Oakley Park, Fowler, Harcourt Leighton of Plash, Mackworth of Betton, Norton, Clive of Styche, Lloyd of Aston, Powell of Park, Baker of Sweeney, Evans of Treflach, Hunt of Shrewsbury (afterwards of Boreatton), More of Linley, Jones of Kilhendre (a regicide), Charlton of Apley, Mitton of Shipton, Edwardes of Greet, Pierpoint of Tong, Young of Caynton, Kinnersley of Badger, Leighton Owen of Bragginton, Betton, Botterell, Waring, Wingfield, Ludlow of the Moorhouse.

Among the waverers were Lord Herbert of Chirbury and the Owens of Condover.

I have pointed out how entirely the castles have disappeared as residences. It is difficult to put one's hand on an inhabited house of the fourteenth century, and not easy to find one of the fifteenth. One of the most ancient residences in Shropshire still used I believe to be the Prior's House at Wenlock, and it is certainly one of the most interesting. I will mention in passing a few other old houses: Plash, near Cardington, can show some remains of Tudor-Gothic, intermixed with Elizabethan work, and it has not been much touched during the last two centuries and a half until it was lately carefully restored. Condover is the largest and best example of the later Elizabethan style in the county. The

Whitehall, however, in Shrewsbury, is perhaps, as a whole, more characteristic, because its surroundings, its gate-house, its dovecot, its walled gardens, and its stables, are still pretty much as they were. There is a good example of an early seventeenth century dovecot and barn at Hodnet. Whitton Court, near Ludlow; Lydston, in Claverley; Madeley Court, Lutwyche, Belswardine, Shipton, Upton Cressett, and Plowden are among the sixteenth and seventeenth century houses which are still maintained as residences; but generally we must seek for old examples of domestic architecture in farm-houses, and in many of these the original character is well preserved. Black and white timbered houses are to be found all over Shropshire, especially in the towns, and above all other towns in Shrewsbury. Pitchford ranks as the best specimen of a country house in this style as a whole, but the frontage of Park Hall, near Oswestry, will bear comparison with any façade of this class in England. Marsh, or March, in the parish of Westbury, is a small black-and-white house, and has been recently excellently restored; and the same may be said of the Black Birches. Melverley Church, Halston Chapel, and Park Hall Chapel are examples of the use of this style in ecclesiastical buildings. The stately but ruinous shell of Moreton Corbet is a fine Jacobean design of first-rate order. The house was burnt down before it was inhabited, and has never been rebuilt.

I draw near to my conclusion, and return to the point from whence I began—that acquaintance with the local evidences of history makes us admit that there are fewer old things of man's contrivance in the world than some people think. Go into any house, and how little can you lay your hands upon which has been in that house for a hundred years! You may see in any well-appointed mansion books and furniture, and swords and armour, and lace and jewellery, and silver and pewter, linen and tapestry, and pictures, but how little, even though it be old, has



CARVED FIGURES *Much Wenlock.*

been in the place for long; how little has been seen and handled by those who lived there centuries ago! There were few books, few pictures, few ornaments, in a country house even in the eighteenth century. The old inventories testify to the simplicity, not to say ruggedness, of the lives of our ancestors. So when people bring treasures of art, and especially when they bring portraits, to an old house they should not be ashamed of labelling them, in order that old things which have been purchased may not be mistaken for old things which were brought into the house when they were new and have grown old in the same place. A mansion may be built in a year—a home cannot be made in a year or in a generation. When a man rebuilds his house by way of making a good job of it, instead of carefully repairing the existing habitation, he destroys a homeliness which he will never see again. More harm has been done by too lavish reconstructions than by neglect.

Shropshire has largely benefited in every generation from new comers, who have added to its material prosperity and pleasant associations.

> The fair new homes of England,
>   Homes of the strong and free,
> Of a race that still for ever will
>   The new world's masters be.

I think, moreover, that in this country the ancient and the modern fairly combine together, and every day grow into closer harmony. Certainly, people are not now so set upon pulling down in order that they may rebuild as they were in other days. There is greater reverence for the past and a better reading of its story.

> The old-world homes of England,
>   What tales their walls can tell
> Of hopes and fears in bygone years
>   To those that read them well.

SHROPSHIRE AND ITS SCHOOLS

BY JOHN ERNEST AUDEN, M.A.

Vicar of Tong; Editor of *Shrewsbury School Register*, 1734-1906

DARKNESS hides the centres of learning in Shropshire during the early history of the county. No doubt, under the Romans Uriconium would have its school, since it was part of their policy that the conquered should learn the language of the conquerors. And Julius Agricola (whose task, directly he became Governor of Britain in A.D. 78, was to crush the rebellion of the Ordovices, a Shropshire tribe)[1] strenuously persuaded the leading British nobles to allow their sons to learn the Latin language and study its literature.[2] The result of this principle was that eventually (in the words of Gildas), "Britain might have been more properly called a Roman than a British island." Christianity, too, must have been spreading in the county during the Roman occupation, for tradition says that when, some fifteen years after the Saxon invasion of 584 and the burning of the "White Town in the Forest," Augustine of Canterbury made a tour up the Severn Valley to Cressage, he found the district already Christian. Probably, therefore, many a missionary had been in his humble way doing what Bede did on a larger scale at Jarrow—gathering together a small band of scholars. Though the power of King Alfred would hardly reach this border county, still the influence of his law compelling all freeholders who possessed two hides of land or upwards to send their sons to school would doubtless be felt, and the force, too, of his example when he repaired the ruined monasteries and built new ones, instituting in each a school where all the knowledge of his day might be taught to laity as well as clergy. This at least may be inferred from the fact that in Saxon times four collegiate churches were founded in Shrewsbury, to each of which was attached a body of clergy whose duty was to go out to the surrounding villages to diffuse knowledge and promote learning, as well as attend the sick and infirm.

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[1] Tacitus, *Agricola*, xviii.

[2] Jam vero principum filios liberalibus artibus erudire, ut qui modo linguam Romanam abnuebant, eloquentiam concupiscerent.—Tacitus, *Agricola*, xxi.

The first real information, however, which we possess is found in the Chronicle of Ordericus. In it he writes:

> I was baptized on the Sunday of Easter, 1075, at Atcham. When five years old I was sent to school at Shrewsbury. While there Siward, a priest of great eminence, instructed me in letters for five years from Nicostrates Carmenta, and taught me Psalms and Hymns and other necessary learning.

His teacher, Siward, was probably the Saxon who ministered in a small wooden church on the site of which Roger Montgomery in 1083 erected his great Abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul, and at the new foundation Ordericus continued his education. It was an integral part of a priest's work to instruct the youth of his generation. In fact, education was left entirely in the hands of the Church, as may be learned from the Canon of 1179, which gave the teachers of cathedral schools authority to superintend all the schoolmasters of the diocese, a Canon which was repeated in 1215.

About this time there were several schools in Shrewsbury attached to the abbey and other religious houses (for in 1232 we read of the post of "rector of the schools of Salop" as evidently one of importance and honour), and this was, no doubt, the case also in other towns in the county, for the present Grammar Schools of Bridgnorth and Ludlow were originally connected with ecclesiastical foundations, the chantry of St. Leonard's and the Palmers' Guild, the former thus dating from the twelfth century, the latter from the thirteenth. In 1410 a Collegiate Church was built at Tong, its statutes providing for a chaplain to teach the children of that and the neighbouring villages reading, singing, and their grammar; and at the same date a similar institution was erected at Battlefield, with a school kept at the college.

In fact, Oswestry, founded in 1404, seems to have been the only public school in Shropshire before the Reformation unconnected with a religious house. There were, however, private schools in some of the larger towns, since, according to the Shrewsbury Corporation books, the bailiffs of 1448 deposed a certain clerk named Thomas Fillilode from any longer teaching boys or keeping school within the town.

Upon the abolition of monastic schools, as Sir William Dugdale remarks, there ensued a great decay of learning, for the Crown was very slow in recognising the duty of carrying on the good work which it had compelled the abbeys and collegiate churches to lay down, and private gainers by the dissolution refused to recognise it at all. For example, in 1548 the Commissioners reported that the priest of the Service of our Lady of Madeley "hath always kepte a gramer schoole there," but no steps were taken by them to continue this work; and the same may be said of Tong and Battlefield, mentioned above.[1]

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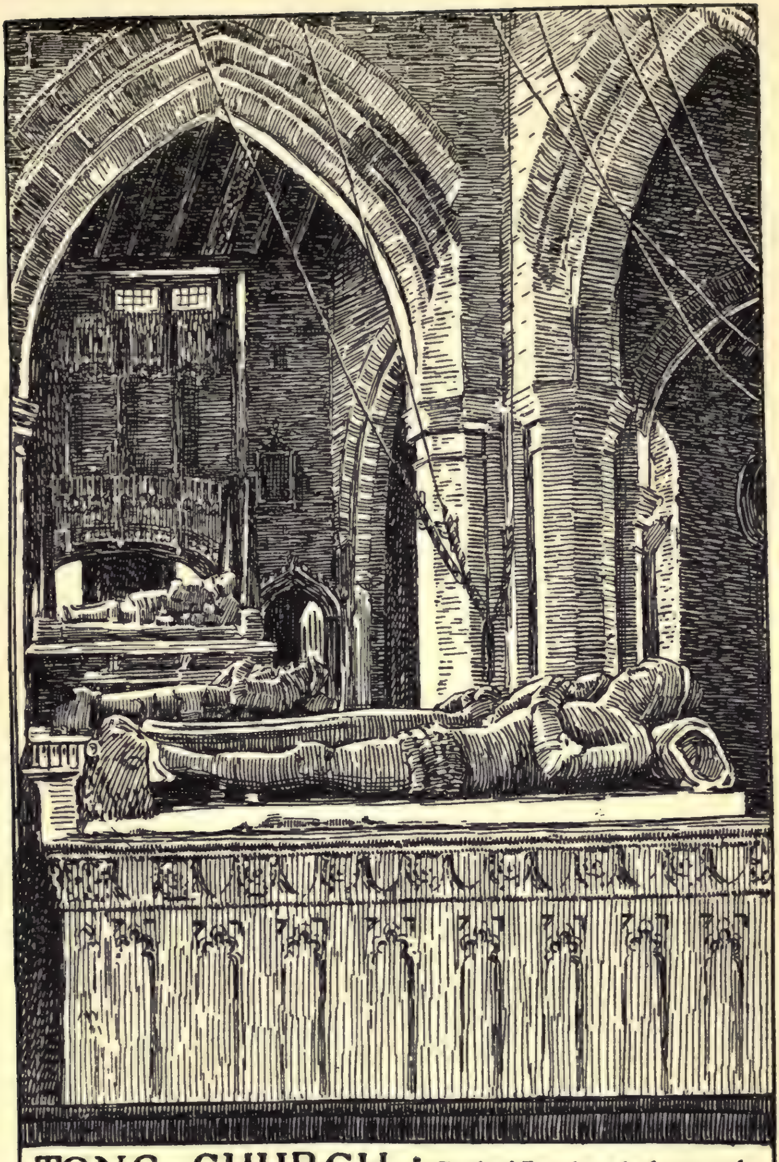
[1] The records appended show that close on 200 Grammar Schools existed in England before the reign of Edward VI., which were, for the most part, abolished or crippled under him. It will appear, however, that the records are defective . . . Enough, however, can be gathered from other sources of information to permit the assertion to be confidently made that 300 is a moderate estimate of the number when the floods of the great revolution, which is called the Reformation, were let loose. Most of them were swept away either under Henry or his son; or, if not swept away, plundered or damaged.—F. A. Leach, *English Schools at the Reformation*, 1546-8 (pp. 5, 6).



TONG CHURCH : *Tomb of Foundress in foreground.*

Edward VI.,[1] indeed, saved the schools of Shrewsbury from perishing by handing back a share of the spoils of the Collegiate Churches of St. Chad and St. Mary; Bridgnorth's endowment was augmented in 1548 by part of the plundered chantries of the town; and Wellington received a royal grant two years later. But private spoilers of monasteries did nothing, and other places had for years to await the generosity of benefactors. It is, too, worth noticing in how many instances Shropshire Grammar Schools were founded by men who had gone from the county, and had made fortunes in London in the seventeenth century.

Here a word might be inserted on the term *Free* Grammar School, which is so often misunderstood. As the late Dr. Kennedy pointed out, it does not mean a school in which the education is gratuitous, but one which is free from the old ecclesiastical jurisdiction. As has been already said, before the Reformation almost every school was attached and subservient to some religious foundation. When Edward VI. and his Council desired to re-found schools, they also wished to place them under conditions less dependent on ecclesiastical power, and therefore chartered them as *liberæ*, free from that jurisdiction to which schools had in former years been subject, and possessing the privilege of governing themselves. In the words of an eminent legal authority, "*Liber homo* may just as well be translated, 'A man whose services you may command for nothing,' as *libera schola*, 'A school to which you may send boys without payment.'"

Taking the various Free Grammar Schools of Shropshire in the order of seniority of foundation, we may enumerate them thus: Ludlow, Bridgnorth, Oswestry, Wellington, Whitchurch, Shrewsbury, Market Drayton, Shifnal, Worfield, Donington, Wem, Newport, Halesowen, High Ercal, Whittington. But, unfortunately, many of them were endowed with a fixed yearly sum, which, though quite adequate at the time, has since become, by the altered value of money, far too small to carry out the intention of the founder; and so the institutions have sunk to the perhaps no less useful *rôle* of elementary schools. This has been the case with Wellington, Shifnal, Donington, High Ercal, and Whittington.

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[1] The expression "Edward VI." is, it must be understood, only a short form for the predominant protector of the moment. The poor, rickety, over-educated boy, who was only sixteen when he died, was not responsible for either the good or the evil that was done in his time. "Edward VI." means first the protector Somerset, then Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, and under them Paget, Sir Walter Mildmay, Lord Chancellors Audley and Rich, and others.—F. A. Leach, p. 5.

Before touching, however, on these various schools in detail, something should be said about the great educational charity—the Careswell—which has assisted so many Shropshire boys to a University career, otherwise impossible to them.

By a will, dated February 3rd, 1689, Edward Careswell, gentleman, of Blakelands, in the parish of Bobbington, who belonged to a Shifnal family, left his estates at Stottesden, Bobbington, Quatford, and other places for the maintenance of eighteen exhibitions at Christ Church, Oxford, open to all natives of Shropshire who had been for two and a half years educated at the Free Schools of Bridgnorth, Shrewsbury, Wem, Newport, Donington, or Shifnal. They were to be allocated in the following proportions:—Shrewsbury 4, Newport 4, Bridgnorth 3, Shifnal 3, Wem 2, Donington 2. Lately, the founder's intentions have been modified, and now the exhibitions may be held at other universities than Oxford.

LUDLOW Grammar School is the oldest existing school in Shropshire, for it was founded by the Palmers' Guild, and this was in being before the reign of King John, and was incorporated in 1284 by Edward I. It is mentioned in records dating back to the fourteenth century, and up to the Dissolution of Religious Houses was held in a building near the church. But in the reign of Henry VIII. a migration was made to what was called the "Great

House," in Mill Street. When the Guild was dissolved, its revenues were confiscated, to be restored, however, in 1552 by Edward VI., who practically re-founded the school, for in his charter the King directed the bailiffs, burgesses, and commonalty of Ludlow "always to find in the same town at their own costs and charges a Free Grammar School, with a schoolmaster and an ussher for the erudition of youth in the Latin Tongue."

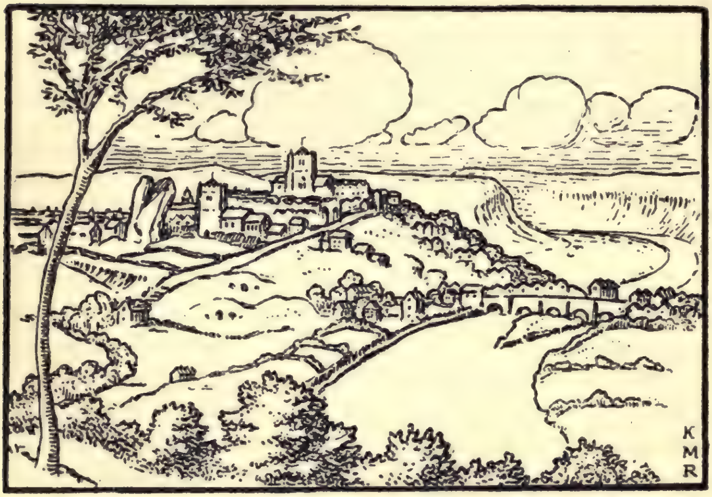
Charles Langford, Dean of Hereford, in 1607 bequeathed the annual sum of £53 4s. for the education of four boys, who must wear black gowns, and whose election was placed in the hands of the bailiffs; while some time afterwards Richard Graves founded two exhibitions of £30 each at Balliol College, Oxford, for "young scholars elected and chosen from the Free School of Ludlow."

Of boys from this school who have made their mark, we may mention William Owen, the Royal Academician, born in 1769; John Williams, Rector of Edinburgh Academy, and Archdeacon of Cardigan, the friend of Sir Walter Scott (who called him "the best schoolmaster in Europe"), and the tutor of Frederick Robertson of Brighton; and George Ballard Matthews, scholar, and afterwards Fellow, of St. John's College, Cambridge, Senior Wrangler of 1883, who was educated at Ludlow Grammar School from the age of eleven till he entered the University, and who, report said, was as many marks above the second of his year as the second was above the thirtieth.

At BRIDGNORTH a school had been supported from the revenues of the chantry of St. Leonard for a long period prior to 1503. But on March 18th of that year an order was made at the Great Court by the twenty-four burgesses "that there schall no priste kepe no schole save oonly oon child to helpe hym to sey masse after that a schole mastur comyth to town, but that every child to resorte to the comyn schole in payne of forfetyng to the chaumber of the towne 20s. of every priste that doth the contrary." This "comyn schole's" endowment was augmented out of the wreck of Church property by Edward VI., for on the dissolution of the several chantries the Commissioners, in 1547, recommended a grant by the Crown of £8 per annum "from the revenues of the late dissolved Chantry of St. Leonard." This estate was subsequently sold, and now the payment is made at the Crown Audit. The bailiffs and Corporation were the governors, since, on July 20th, 1629, they dismissed both head-master and usher. In the early part of the seventeenth century Sir William Whitmore, Knight, of Apley, built a schoolhouse on the south-east side of St. Leonard's Churchyard, and a dwelling for the use of the head-master, letting the latter at the nominal rent of eight shillings per annum, which is still (or was quite recently) charged.

Of famous alumni, Sir Rowland Hayward, Knight, Citizen and Alderman of London, was Lord Mayor in 1560 and 1590, and was a benefactor to his old school; Thomas Percy, successively chaplain to George II., Dean of Carlisle, and Bishop of Dromore, was the author of *The Hermit of Warkworth*, and the compiler of *Reliques of Ancient Poetry;* William MacMichael, M.D., was Physician to William IV., and also his Librarian; and Ralph Robert Wheeler Lingen while at Trinity College, Oxford, gained the Ireland, the Hertford, and the Eldon Scholarships, the Latin Essay Prize, and a First Class, was elected a Fellow of Balliol, was made a K.C.B. in 1879, and raised to the Peerage as Baron Lingen in 1885 for his work as Permanent Secretary to the Treasury from 1870 to that year, and died on July 22nd, 1905, aged eighty-six years.

We cannot leave Bridgnorth without speaking of an act of self-sacrificing heroism on the part of one of its boys some forty years ago. When the roof of St. Leonard's Church was under repair two boys from the school made their way in during the workmen's dinner hour. They climbed on to the scaffolding, and while moving about a plank on which they were standing gave way. In falling, the younger of the boys managed to lay hold of a beam, and the elder saved himself by seizing him by the legs. There they hung, hoping each moment the workmen would return and rescue them from their perilous position. After a while the elder perceived that the younger's fingers were relaxing their grasp of the beam, and at once asked if he thought he could hold on for ten minutes longer if freed from the weight on his legs. After a moment's hesitation he faintly whispered that he thought he could. Then the elder, with a message to his mother and a good-bye to his comrade, loosed his hold and fell to the floor of the church. Shortly afterwards the workmen came and rescued the younger from his perilous position, but the elder had been instantly killed by the fall.



From an] [*Old Water-colour.*

BRIDGNORTH.

OSWESTRY, the earliest *Free* Grammar School in

Shropshire, was, according to Leland, founded in 1404 "by one Davy Holbeche, a lawyer, steward of the towne and lordship, who gave £10 land to it," and a house on the south-west side of the church. (David Holbeche was possibly M.P. for the county of Salop, and afterwards for Shrewsbury.) Among the statutes for the government of the school, drawn up in 1577 by the vicar and the bailiffs of Oswestry, during the mastership of William Marbury, M.A., occur the following regulations, which seem worth quoting, as showing bygone customs and manners:—

> *6th item.*—Whereas a certain Duty due to former Schoole Mrs. in the said Schoole commonly called Cockefight money was but a peny of ev'ry Schoolar, he the said new Schoole Mr. is henceforth to have and receive of ev'ry one of his Schoolars 2d. yearly for the Cockefight money.
>
> *8th item.*—The Schoole Mr. shall at all the School Dayes of the year, winter and summer, resort to his said Charge and Schoole at 6, or between 6 and 7 of ye clock in the morning, and shall continue there till 5 of ye clock in the evening, the time of Meals excepted.

Till 1869 there were no scholarships from Oswestry to the University; then, however, money was raised to found one open to any boy at the school. The earliest holder of this was Alexander Fletcher Jones, mathematical scholar of B.N.C., Oxford, who subsequently gained two first classes in Mathematics and a first in Natural Science. He was afterwards a master at Clifton College, and when returning home from a review with the School Cadet Corps was fatally injured by the accidental explosion of a rifle.

During the long head-mastership of Dr. Donne, lasting from 1796 to 1833, there were at times upwards of three hundred boys on the books at once, and his pupils included two future deans, four canons, a G.C.B., an F.R.S., four generals, five M.P.'s, and three County Court Judges. Among earlier Oswestrians were Humphrey Humphreys, Bishop of Bangor 1689-1701, and of Hereford 1701-12; and Thomas Bray, Bishop of London's Commissary for Maryland, Vicar of St. Botolph's, Aldgate, and founder of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Among the later alumni were Colonel Burnaby, of Khiva fame, and Colonel Turner Jones, R.E., who served in the Afghan War under Lord Roberts, and was mentioned in General Orders and recommended for the V.C. for his gallantry on August 12th, 1880.

Oswestry was one of the many schools affected by the Civil War. Edward Payne, who had been appointed head-master in 1640, took the King's side, and the following letter from Oliver, Lord Protector, dated "Whitehall, July 13th, 1657," tells his fate:

> Wee being informed that the Free Schoole of our Towne of Oswestrie is now voyd of a head Schoolmaster settled there by reason of the Delinquency and Ejection of Edward Paine, late Schoole Master thereof, have thought fitt to recommend Mr. John Evans, the sonne of Matthew Evans, late of Penegroes in the county of Mountgomery, as a fit person both for piety and learning . . . "

Evans did not long enjoy his new position, for on the Restoration in 1660 he was in his turn expelled and Payne re-appointed. The school, however, had not been allowed to die out in the interval between the Loyalist's ejection and the Protector's appointment, for "John Wilcockes, Schoolmaster of Oswestry," was elected one of the Presbyterian Elders for Shropshire in 1647.[1]

In 1548 the Commissioners for the Regulation, Continuance, and Erection of Schools found that "the preste celebrating at the altar of Our Lady within the parish church of WELLINGTON kepte always a Grammer Schoole ther freelie," and directed that it should be continued, and that the master should have the annual salary of £4 17s. 6d., as had of old been used, and that this should be paid by the Receiver of the Court of Augmentation. Though this sum is still paid annually to the Elementary Schools, there has been no Grammar School at Wellington for centuries—in fact, it does not appear that any regular foundation was ever established.

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[1] For a fuller account of Oswestry School, see a paper by the late Mr. Askew Roberts in the *Transactions of the Shropshire Archæological Society*, October, 1881.

Though we read of Bishop Norbury, of Lichfield, licensing John Gilbert in 1328, and William de Grophull in 1358, to keep a Grammar School at WHITCHURCH, the present school there is of later date, and owes its origin to the Rev. John Talbot, Rector of Whitchurch, and others, in 1550. They gave an endowment for a master and an usher, and a house for the former, of whom the right of choice was vested in feoffees chosen out of the principal inhabitants of the town.

Robert Clive, of Styche, son of Ambrose Clive, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, was at Whitchurch Grammar School for three years before he entered his father's old college in 1630. He afterwards sat as M.P. for Bridgnorth in the Long Parliament, was a member of the Committee of Safety of 1643, was one of the sequestrators for Shropshire, and a colonel in the Parliamentary Army. In this last position he was so active that it was rather profanely suggested that the people of Shrewsbury should add to their Litany the following clause:—

> From Wem, and from Wyche,
> And from Clive of the Styche,
> Good Lord, deliver us.

When the Abbey and the other religious institutions of SHREWSBURY were dissolved in 1538, a proposal was made, but never carried out, to erect this town into a bishop's see, with a school attached having a master and an usher, "to teach bothe grammer and logycke in the greke and latten tonge." When this scheme came to nought, the burgesses in 1548 sent to Lord Rich, the Lord Chancellor, a vain supplication for a free school, and (now joined by the principal inhabitants of Shropshire and the adjacent counties and mid-Wales) they two years later made another, and this time a successful, effort, for, as an old chronicle tells us:

1551-2. This yeare by the labor of one Hughe Edwards of Salop, and late of London, merc', and Master Rychard Whyttacks . . . an anwetie of xxli for and towards the mayntenance of a free schoole in the sayde town of Shrewsbury for ever was obtayned to the great preferment of the youthe of that towne and the quarters there adjoyninge in good lerninge and godly educason.

The charter of Edward VI. bears the date February 10th, 1551-2, and is a grant of part of the tithes of the late colleges of St. Mary and St. Chad. The first master was a Sir Morys, who was apparently not a success, and the second a John Eyton, also a failure. But 1561 saw the appointment of Thomas Ashton, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and the school at once sprang into the first rank, for on December 28th, 1562, there were 266 scholars on the books, half *alieni*, half *oppidani;* and in seven years 875 boys were admitted.

On May 23rd, 1571, Queen Elizabeth, in answer to the prayer of Ashton, her personal friend, made a further grant of the tithes of the Priory of Chirbury, and more of the estate of St. Mary's. The ordinances by which the school was governed till 1798 (when they were repealed by Act of Parliament) were drawn up by Ashton in 1577, who, though he had resigned his head-mastership six years before, still continued the "godlie father" of the school till his death in 1578. The hours were: From Lady Day to All Saints' Day, 6 a.m. to 11, and 12.45 p.m. to 5.30; from All Saints' Day to Lady Day, 7 a.m. to 11, and 12.45 to 4.30, if daylight served, no candles being permitted, for fear of "breeding disease, or peril otherwise." The games allowed were shooting with the long bow, chess, running, wrestling, and leaping, for limited stakes, no betting being allowed on any consideration. In Ashton's days dramatic performances were a prominent feature of school life at Shrewsbury, and he left a standing regulation that every Thursday before enjoying a holiday the highest form should "declaim and play one act of a comedy." Ashton was succeeded by Thomas Lawrence, another Fellow of St. John's, who was equally successful as a teacher, and whose average number of boys was not far short of 400, for in 1586 Camden calls his school "the best fitted in all England," and "the nursery of learning and a singular benefit to the whole Commonwealth."

Instead of stage plays Lawrence had a liking for pageants, and the old Chronicle gives us an account of a great military display made in 1582 by the boys for the entertainment of Sir Henry Sydney, when the whole school seems to have been one large volunteer corps:

> The seconde days of Maye all the scollars of the Free Scoole beinge in number 360, with the masters before them marching bravely in battel order with theire generalls, captens, droomes, troompets and ensigns before them through the towne towards a lawge filld callyd the Geye, and there devydinge their bands into iiii parts, met the Lord President;

and when Sir Henry left again by river certain chosen boys made "lamentable oracons, sorrowinge his departure."

After twelve years' work Lawrence resigned, and was followed by John Meighen, one of Ashton's pupils, who governed the school for forty-eight years with a success which would have been much greater had it not been for the town bailiffs, who were continually interfering in matters which did not concern them. The head-master, for instance, desired to promote Ralph Gittins, the third master, to be second; they refused their consent. Meighen, however, did promote him, and Gittins moved into the second master's lodgings. This was too much for the bailiffs, who proceeded to attempt his removal by force. But Gittins was popular with his pupils, and, therefore, with the ladies of Shrewsbury (their mothers and sisters), and, egged on, no doubt, by sons and brothers, who would enter hugely into the joke, "many women forcibly kept possession of the schoolhouse by the space of four days and three nights together, at which time one of the bailiffs endeavouring to go into the school up a pair of stairs had like to have been killed or spoiled by the casting of a piece of timber down the said stairs." In the end, however, Gittins was compelled to resign, though after a few years he was reinstated by Meighen, who took a subtle revenge on his adversaries. About this time the schoolhouse, which was of timber, was taken down and entirely rebuilt of freestone. The bailiffs wished to have their own names placed over the gateway rather than a Greek inscription. To this Meighen would by no means consent, but he pointed out to them a small building close at hand newly dedicated, not to the Muses, but to Cloacina, and suggested a stone over the door as admirably adapted for such a record. The bailiffs fell into the trap, and their names were to be read there by admiring schoolboys so late as 1798.

Such dissensions naturally caused the school to fall somewhat in numbers, till Meighen's resignation, and the appointment of a pupil of his, Thomas Chaloner, in 1635. In his first nine months 128 new boys were admitted, but soon clouds of Civil War began to loom over the land, and in November, 1642, Chaloner wrote: "Academies mourn, the colonyes of Muses are desolate, and the number of Shrewsbury schoole is small." He was himself a stout Royalist, and when the King came to Shrewsbury in the September of that year, he and his friend and colleague, David Evans, placed their chambers at the disposal of the royal company, and lent the school library for meetings of the Commission of Artillery. Six hundred pounds was also borrowed by Charles from the school chest, and, of course, never repaid. For all these acts, it is not surprising that when the Parliamentarians gained possession of Shrewsbury, they at once ejected Chaloner from his post and appointed another in his room, one Richard Pigott. "Bonis omnibus exutus *ἀπεσκοράκισθον*" ("Robbed of all my goods, I was cast out to the crows") is Chaloner's own account. For nineteen years he was a wanderer, a very Ulysses of schoolmasters, till at last, when the King got his own again, he returned to his "ancient province."

But we have not space to go through the history of the various head-masters, or trace how the school's fortunes rose with some and fell with others, till at the end of the eighteenth century it reached its lowest under James Atcherley, who in twenty-eight years reduced its numbers to twenty-two—a fact which is not surprising if we believe the traditional tale that the favourite amusement of this head-master and his colleagues was to practise kicking at a flitch of bacon hung in the kitchen for the purpose, to see who could kick the highest. But many gentlemen of influence in Shrewsbury and the neighbourhood had become convinced that unless drastic measures were taken there would be no hope of Shrewsbury ever taking its old place among public schools. They therefore obtained an Act of Parliament in 1798, by which Ashton's ordinances, which had governed the school since 1577, were revoked.

The new head-master was the great Dr. Samuel Butler, who held office for thirty-eight years, and entirely revived the fallen glories of Shrewsbury, raising its average numbers to nearly three hundred. When he resigned in 1836 and became Bishop of Lichfield, one of his most distinguished pupils, Benjamin Hall Kennedy, was chosen to succeed. He held the reins till 1866, then the present head-master was appointed, under whose guidance the removal to Kingsland (in the opinion of the late Dr. Thring, of Uppingham, "the finest site for a school in England") was successfully carried through. But whoever would study the history of this famous school at length should turn to the late Rev. G. W. Fisher's *Annals of Shrewsbury School* (Methuen & Co.).

Of illustrious old Salopians we have room to mention very few. Among Ashton's pupils were Sir Philip Sydney, the hero of Zutphen; his friend, Greville, Lord Brooke; Andrew Downes, Professor of Greek at Cambridge, one of the translators of the Bible; and John Penry, the Puritan, author of the *Martin Mar-Prelate Tracts*. Among those of Lawrence were Lord Chief Justice Crewe;

Edward Bromley, Baron of the Exchequer; Sir Clement Edwards, Muster Master-General and Secretary of State; and Rowland Heylin, at whose cost the Bible was translated into Welsh. Meighen taught Sampson Price, *malleus hæreticorum;* Bishops Dee of Peterborough and Woolley of Clonfert; Sir Piers Griffith, commander of a ship against the Armada; the Royalist officers, Sir William Vaughan, Sir Francis Ottley, and Sir Thomas Scriven; and their opponents, Colonels Thomas Hunt, Samuel More, and Humphrey Mackworth. Chaloner did the same to Sir George Saville, Marquis of Halifax, the "Great Trimmer," as Macaulay styles him. Of Pigott's days were "Demosthenes" Taylor, the scholar; William Williams, Speaker of the House of Commons (who, as Attorney-General, with his old school-fellow, Thomas Powys, as Solicitor-General, conducted the prosecution of the Seven Bishops); and Chief Justice Jeffreys. In later years came Richard Hill, the diplomatist; Ambrose Phillips, the poet; Thomas Johnes, translator of Froissart; Sir Richard Perrott, A.D.C. to the Duke of Cumberland at Culloden; Bishops Bowers of Chichester and Thomas of St. Asaph; and Senior Wranglers Edward Waring and Thomas Jones. Of the alumni of the last one hundred years it is almost invidious to give names. Of those who entered Navy or Army, representatives were present at Trafalgar and Waterloo and other scenes of the Napoleonic struggle; twenty-two or more served in the Crimea, of whom one commanded the first troops landed for that campaign, and two were killed in action; in the Indian Mutiny twelve at least took part, two meeting their death at Lucknow; and of the 133 who fought in "the great Boer War," fourteen laid down their lives. In the Church, there have been one archbishop and eleven bishops; three Salopians, too, assisted in the Revised Version of the New Testament. In Law, the Chief Justices of Ireland, Bombay, Queensland, and Lagos, and many County Court Judges and King's and Queen's Counsels. In Science and Art, Charles Darwin and seven other Fellows of the Royal Society, and the Antiquaries Sir C. T. Newton and the Rev. C. H. Hartshorne; while the *Sabrinæ Corolla* proves to the world the ability of Salopians in classical composition. In the Senate, some thirty-three have sat as M.P., several of whom have held high office in the Government. In Sport, seven or eight have acted as Masters of Foxhounds. In the "Battle of the Blues," twenty-seven have striven manfully on the Thames and seven on the cricket field, not to mention football and other contests. Finally, at the Universities Shrewsbury has had one Senior Wrangler and eighteen Senior Classics; and has won almost numberless First Classes and University Prizes at Oxford and Cambridge (four of the latter being gained by boys while still in the Sixth Form). "It is not, however," as Dr. Kennedy once said, "in the more conspicuous walks of public life that you must seek instances of the success and usefulness of Shrewsbury men. You will find them at the Universities honourably and usefully engaged in tuition; in country livings honourably and usefully fulfilling their sacred duties as clergymen; at the head of Grammar Schools employed in training new generations to a like career of honour and usefulness. You will find them, I hope, wherever they are, acting always as honourable and useful members of society."

MARKET DRAYTON Grammar School is one of the few schools dating from the reign of Philip and Mary. Letters Patent of November 6th, 1555, directed that the school should be called "The Free Grammar School of Sir Rowland Hyll, Knight, Citizen and Alderman of London." By these power was given to the founder to appoint master and usher as often as those places were vacant during his lifetime, and also to make statutes for its government. He named as governors the churchwardens of Drayton and their successors. But in the Civil War his statutes were not observed, for the school declining under a Mr.

Cudworth (probably brother of Ralph Cudworth, the author of *The Intellectual System*), Sir John Corbet, of Adderley, M.P. for Shropshire, took the matter into his own hands, and at the beginning of February, 1646-7, appointed Thomas Chaloner, already mentioned as ejected two years before from a like position at Shrewsbury, to the head-mastership, at the same time procuring a dispensation from Parliament on his behalf. But before a month was over the Shropshire Committee interfered, deprived him of the post, and frustrated the general expectation that under his management "the faded glories of the school would be revived."

The Orders and Statutes date from November 5th, 1719 (when John Addenbrooke was chief schoolmaster and Joseph Bown usher). These declare that the school was to be kept in St. Mary's Hall, "free for all children placed there for their learning to read English and to understand the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages."

The hours were to be: March 25th to September 29th, from between 6 and 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a break for dinner from 11 to 1; September 29th to March 25th, "from as soon as the scholars could read" to as long as they could, provided this was not after 5. Should any gentleman ask for a holiday for them, he must pay 2s. 6d. towards the fund for improving the school library. The school boys were not to play with the town boys who did not belong to the school, nor be allowed to converse with them, and all such town boys, not being scholars of the school, were to be expelled and driven out of the churchyard from the company and conversation of the scholars. No boy or boys were to bar out the master or usher before Christmas on pain of expulsion.

One of the treasures of Market Drayton School is a fragment of an old desk fixed against one of the interior walls, which bears the initials "R. C." These letters are supposed to have been cut by the great Lord Clive when a Market Drayton grammar school boy. It was while here that he performed his well-known feat of climbing up to the roof of the church tower, and then lowering himself down on to a gargoyle, on which he sat astride, to the great consternation of the townspeople below.

The origin of the Free Grammar School at SHIFNAL is uncertain, but it was in existence in 1595, when John Aron by will left £20 towards erecting a schoolhouse. Subsequently it received several other small benefactions. Though one of the schools chosen in 1689 to enjoy the Careswell Charity, all the endowments were in 1761 diverted to the English or Elementary School, with the exception of a legacy from a Mr. Bennett of £4 10s. The classical master, therefore, had perforce to keep a private boarding establishment under the name of the Grammar School; and this was done fairly successfully at Idsall House from about 1780 by the Revs. Robert Dean, John Wood, J. Matthews, Samuel Clarke (1856-67), and W. F. Satchell (1867-73), after whose time the so-called Grammar School gradually declined, and finally disappeared. Of boys educated here we may mention the late John Hawley Edwards, Magistrates' Clerk at Shrewsbury, one of the finest players who ever stepped on a football field, who represented both England and Wales in International Matches, and was Captain of the once famous Shropshire Wanderers.

WORFIELD Grammar School evidently existed prior to 1613, for in that year James I., by his Letters Patent (in consideration of £5 4s. paid by Thomas Beech and Thomas Bradburne), granted to William Lloyd and Thomas Parker and their heirs certain premises in Worfield, Bridgnorth, and Quatford, in trust, that the yearly proceeds should be employed for "the instruction of youth in reading and writing English and in the accidence and principles of grammar and of the Latin tongue." There appear to have been "savings" out of the income, and these purchased land at Brierley Hill for a small sum, which the discovery of minerals caused to be valuable and to realise £16,000, which forms the nucleus of all the endowments of the parish. With part of this sum a new school and master's house were built in 1878 at Roughton. Latterly, however, the number of pupils has greatly decreased, though boys from Worfield have gained scholarships at Clifton, Rossall, Bloxham, etc. For some years at the close of the seventeenth century the head-master was Thomas Turner, Rector of Badger; and it is a somewhat curious coincidence that at the close of the nineteenth century the head-master, the Rev. Thomas W. Turner, for four years had charge of the same parish.

The Free Grammar School of WEM owes its beginning in 1650 to Sir Thomas Adams, woollen-draper, Alderman, and Lord Mayor of London. He was a son of Thomas Adams, of Wem, tanner, and after taking his degree at Jesus College, Cambridge, engaged in business in London, and speedily rose to wealth and eminence. In 1639 he was sheriff, in 1645 Lord Mayor, and for his sufferings as a Royalist was made a Baronet in 1660. He used his riches well, for besides giving "the house of his nativity to be a Free School for the education of the Town-born children of Wem," he founded the Readership of Arabic at Cambridge, and bore the expense of translating the gospels into Persian.

The first head-master was the Rev. Richard Roderick, M.A., of Christ Church, Oxford, who retained the post till his death in 1674. At first the school was carried on in a large room over the Market House, but in August, 1665, a Mr. Wycherley, who had bought the manor of Wem, forbade its further use for this purpose, and from that time the teaching was done in the church till a schoolhouse was built in 1670. The premises were rebuilt in 1776.

The Free Grammar School of DONINGTON, in the parish of Wroxeter, was instituted in 1627 by Thomas Alcocke, and endowed with £13 6s. 8d., and thirty years afterwards Richard Stevenson by will left a like sum. This school was originally kept in Wroxeter Church till a house and six acres of land were given by some unknown benefactor. It was intended for forty boys, inhabitants of Wroxeter and Uppington, to be prepared for the University, and among its head-masters have been Goronwy Owen, "the Premier Poet of Wales," and John Douglas, "Scourge of impostors and terror of quacks," Bishop of Salisbury 1791-1807. Of his days at Donington Richard Baxter, author of *The Saints' Rest*, wrote:

> The present Lord Newport and his brother were then my schoolfellows in a lower form; and Dr. Richard Allestree, now Doctor of the Chair in Oxford, Canon of Christ Church, and Provost of Eton College; of whom I remember, that when my master set him up into the lower end of the highest form, where I had long been chief, I took it so ill, that I talkt of leaving the School. Whereupon my master gravely but very tenderly rebuked my pride, and gave me for my theme: Ne sutor ultra crepidam.

George Rowland Edwards, of Ness Strange, who served in the Hon. East India Company's Army 1816-62, and retired as Colonel of the 2nd Madras Cavalry, was a distinguished scholar of a later date.

At NEWPORT there was a school attached to the Collegiate Church (founded by Thomas Draper in 1442), and in 1547 it was under the charge of Richard Robyns, one of the Brethren of the College. When this was dissolved, and its income seized, £5 was allowed to Robyns for his work, and no doubt also to his successors, for in 1581 a sum of £5 was ordered to be paid to the schoolmaster from the former college lands, and £5 is still given from the Land Revenues of the Crown. In 1633 William Robson, a member of the Salters' Company of London, and native of Newport, gave £5 per annum to the master of the free school of Newport, but his benefaction was soon thrown into the shade by the liberality of William Adams, citizen and haberdasher of London. He, by a deed dated November 27th, 1656, re-founded the school and endowed it with considerable landed property at Knighton, Adbaston, and Woodease. Four years later an Act of Parliament was obtained appointing the Master and Wardens of the Fraternity of the Art or Mystery of Haberdashery in the City of London as Governors.

Mr. Adams, in turn, wished Thomas Chaloner, ejected from Shrewsbury and Market Drayton, to be head-master of his new school. Cromwell's assent was obtained through the influence of one of his chaplains, Thomas Gilbert, Rector of Edgmond, "the Bishop of Shropshire," as he was sometimes called, a man of great power at the time; and Chaloner could now thankfully describe himself as one

> Cujus, vexata procellis
> Innumeris, perpessa minas coelique marisque,
> Tandem tuta Novo consedit cymbula Portu.

The school was formally opened on January 7th, 1656-7, the head-master bringing forty-five boys with him from Ruthin; in sixteen months the numbers were sufficient to warrant the appointment of a second master, and a school list dated January 26th, 1658-9, contains as many as 242 names.

The statutes, constitutions, and orders made and subscribed by the founder for the government of his school bear the date February 2nd, 1656. Among them are:

(1) The School to be free to 80 scholars for the teaching of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew tongues or any one of them.

(5) The School hours to be March 10 to Sept. 10, from 6 to 11 a.m., and from 1 to 5 p.m.; Sept. 10 to March 10, from 7 to 11 a.m. (except in the two months when the days are shortest it is to be from 7.30 to 11.30), and from 1 to 5 p.m., or as long as daylight continues; no candles being allowed for teaching in the School at any time.

(15) No scholars that have attained such progress as to be able to speak Latin shall either within or without school speak English when they are among the scholars of the same or a higher form.

(18) No scholar shall at any time with knife or otherwise cut, notch, or deface, wainscot, forms, seats, &c. The Master upon conviction shall inflict exemplary punishment for deterring of others so to do.

Thomas Brown, the humorous, though somewhat coarse, poet, buried in Westminster Abbey in 1704, and William Cureton, the eminent Orientalist, Canon of Westminster and Chaplain to Queen Victoria, were Newport Grammar School boys; and here also was Sir Oliver J. Lodge, F.R.S., the famous Physicist, Principal of Birmingham University, though only for a short time, since he left when but 14.

In 1644 John Pearsall, of Hawn, gave by will £5 towards building a free school at HALESOWEN, formerly a detached portion of Shropshire; and a Commission, sent down from the Court of Chancery in the time of the Commonwealth, endowed it with houses and lands. Here William Shenstone, the poet, received his early training.

At HIGH ERCAL Thomas Leeke, Baron of the Exchequer, of the family now settled at Longford, founded a Grammar School in 1662, but since 1887 the funds have been too low to admit of its being carried on.

Lastly, WHITTINGTON once possessed a Grammar School, the gift of Peter Webster, and dating back to 1681.

Of Endowed Village or Elementary Schools there are many in Shropshire founded before the eighteenth century. At Onibury, for instance, William Norton in 1593 left an annual sum of £6 13s. 4d. for the education of the children of that place; at Barrow a Mr. Slaney in 1612 founded a school for sixty pupils; at Alveley, John Grove, a native of the parish and Freeman of the London Grocers' Company, in 1616 bequeathed £10 to be paid annually to the village schoolmaster; at Tong, Lady Pierrepoint revived the old College School dormant for more than a hundred years, and in 1656 left yearly sums of £4 for teaching poor girls to read, and £1 for their books; at Claverley, the National School is supported by the legacy of Richard Dovey, who in 1659 gave land, the proceeds thereof to clothe and educate fourteen boys;

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at Lydbury North, John Shipman, house-steward at Walcot, by his will of May 26th, 1662, left £200 for the erection of a room in which all the poor children in the parish might be instructed, and his master, John Walcot, gave an annual endowment for it of £4; and at Chirbury in 1675 the Vicar, Edward Lewis, built a school-house and endowed it with £20 a year to pay a master. Elsewhere, too, there were parish schools carried on at least as early as the seventeenth century; for example, at Alberbury and Bitterley, the former taught by the parish clerk, the latter under the superintendence of the churchwardens, who in 1697 paid "for chimney money for ye schoole, 10s." At Middle also there was a school before 1642, for in that year Gough tells us, "the old Communion Table was brought into the schoolehouse for boyes to write on; the old Reading Peiw was likewise brought into the schoolehouse for the schoolemaster to sitt in." And, as the Church Register declares, "Abraham Howell, of Ashford Carbonell, schoolmaster, was the 10th of October, 1653, chosen to be register *(sic)* for the parish of Ashford aforesaid."

Before leaving the schools of Shropshire, mention should be made of the proposed university at Shrewsbury and the once-famous academy at Sheriffhales. Richard Baxter, the divine, in 1656 wrote to his friend John Lewis:

> I am most desirous to treat with you about a Colledge with academicall priviledges for Wales, and I am glad that you and Dr. Ellis[1] favor it. I did ten years agoe expound it to Col. Mackworth[2] but succeeded not. Halfe a yeare ago I expounded it to Major Genll. Berry,[3] who promised me his best assistance, but the want is money. Till we see a probability for that it is in vaine to gett authority. I heard of a Shrewsbury man liveinge in London worth £40,000 that had no child to leave it to, and wrote to him—though a mere stranger—my strongest arguments to move him to bestow on such a foundation; but could not prevail. If you could but get £1,000 stock to build so much of a Colledge as would containe an hundred students and but £200 or £300 per annum at first laid to it,

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[1] Vicar of Dolgelly, and Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford.

[2] Governor of Shrewsbury.

[3] Cromwell's Major-General.

I say if you could first procure assurance of this much either from one y^t^ shall be ye founder, or by contribution, I make no doubt to procure authority from ye Protector and Parliament, and some hundred pounds per annum addition from my friends, perhaps many, for many will give to such a work when they see it in a hopefull way, yet will not begin it as not knowinge who will helpe it on. I conceive Shrewsbury ye only fitt place in many respects. 1st It's a capable place where may be sufficient accommodations and a place of some name: 2nd A little within ye verge of England is best that your sons may learne English: 3rd It's a place of strengthe, if warre should arise ye students may be secured: 4th It's a strength where they may live without military entanglements. Ludlow Castle will not be trusted to scollars unless they turned soldiers and ye town would not secure them, nay ye castle will draw ruine on them: 5th It is a healthfull seat: 6th There is a gallant free schoole allready to perceive for ye academy, and I know no reason but £100 or £200 per annum might be allowed out of ye now superfluous maintenance of ye schoole.

Despite all Richard Baxter's efforts, his scheme came to naught, but less than twenty years afterwards at Sheriffhales was started a real Academy—*i.e.*, a provincial university—a place where the higher branches of learning were taught, and where youths were trained in special arts and sciences for the learned professions, and not a mere private school, into which the name has now degenerated. It was conducted by the Rev. John Woodhouse, who at one time had between forty and fifty students, including Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke; the two sons of Sir Edward Harley, Robert Earl of Oxford and Edward the Auditor; Thomas, Lord Foley; Thomas Hunt of Boreatton; members of the Winnington and Lechmere families, besides many theological students. The pupils were of the same age at which others at that date went to Oxford or Cambridge, and the provision for their instruction was as varied as that of the Universities themselves. The lectures comprised courses in Logic, Anatomy, and Mathematics, followed by Physics, Ethics, and Rhetoric. Lessons were given in Greek and Hebrew. Law lectures were provided for those who had entered at the Inns of Court or were intended for the legal profession; while those who aspired to the pulpit were taken through a course of theological study. All students, without exception, were obliged to read certain works on natural religion and Christian evidences; and as Grotius was one of these authors, we see a previous knowledge of Latin was taken for granted. Practical exercises were not neglected. Debates were held on Fridays, and on Sundays the elder theological students were called upon to take part in the family devotions, not only in prayers composed by themselves, but in setting psalms to tunes. On other days they were employed in surveying land, composing almanacs, making sundials of different construction, or dissecting animals. Altogether it was a liberal curriculum, and for about twenty years this Academy was a good substitute for the Universities, from which so many were in those days barred by the Test Acts. Its life lasted probably from about 1675 to 1696.[1]

Such is a short and superficial review of the educational facilities enjoyed by Shropshire at foundations prior to the eighteenth century, for those of a later date do not come within the scope of this paper. And from the facts herein mentioned we must, I think, arrive at the conclusion that this was a county in which the advantages of learning, both classical and elementary, were in former times more adequately supplied than in many, or perhaps most, of the others in England.

JOHN ERNEST AUDEN.

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[1] From information kindly supplied by the Rev. A. T. Mitchell, M.A., F.S.A., Vicar of Sheriffhales.

ARCHITECTURAL STORY

REPRESENTATIVE BUILDINGS

BY HENRIETTA M. AUDEN, F.R.HIST.S.

SHROPSHIRE has its fair share of representative buildings. We can hardly count among them the hut circles and camps on the hills, nor the strongholds among the meres and woodland. The Roman buildings, too, have been reduced to buried foundations, with the one exception of the "old wall" of the public baths at Uriconium. Our Saxon forefathers also have left little trace of their dwellings, and the Lady of Mercia's castles at Oldbury and Chirbury are now simply earthen mounds differing little but in size from the sites of the homes of the Saxon franklins shown in several villages, notably at Shawbury, by a moated mound near the church, and at Humphreston, near Tong.

The Britons of Powisland were Christians before Offa in the eighth century wrested Pengwern from their hands, but (unless we except the foundations of a very early church existing under the flooring of St. Mary's, Shrewsbury) there is no trace of a Christian building before the later Saxon days.

Perhaps one of the most early Christian monuments now to be seen in Salop is the cross built into Wroxeter Church. It dates from the eighth or ninth century, and may have been erected on the outskirts of the old Roman city that the Saxon tillers of the fertile land should feel protected from the evil spirits supposed to haunt the ruins of the forsaken Roman houses.

Milburga, a daughter of Merewald, the son of Penda, a sub-King of the Western Hecani, in the latter part of the seventh century founded a religious house at Much Wenlock, and ruled over it until her death. The late Captain Williams-Freeman, whose knowledge of Shropshire was unrivalled, both in breadth of view and accuracy of detail, said that she must have been a woman of power and foresight, for the lands of her abbey bore trace of her wise rule even in the present day. The little church of Barrow, near Wenlock, contains Saxon work which may go back to the eighth century, almost to her time. The church of Stottesden has Saxon carving above the western doorway that now leads into the base of the tower; it seems to be a rude representation of a hunting scene, with very upside-down animals. The date is probably of the early eleventh century, rather earlier than the Saxon work remaining at Stanton Lacy Church, where the north wall of the nave and the north transept show the unmistakable long and short work of the period. Stanton Lacy was probably built in the reign of Edward the Confessor, and was in good repair during the time that Norman architecture was in fashion, for there is no trace of that style, and the present chancel is Early English of the thirteenth century.

The church of Diddlebury in Corvedale has Saxon work in the north wall of the nave and the base of the tower. The church of Wroxeter has also a little Saxon work in the north wall, in which Roman material has been worked up. Rushbury Church, which stands near the site of a Roman station, has a piece of early walling incorporating Roman work in its twelfth century nave.

The coming of the Norman brought in a new order of things. The timber homestead of the Saxon franklin, defended at most by a ditch and palisade, made way in many cases for the Norman castle. The manor of Stanton-in-Corvedale, for instance, was given to a Norman baron, Helgot, who built there the castle which gave the place its name of Castle Holgate. Another Norman, Corbet, and his son Roger, founded the great castle of Caus, which they called after their Norman home. The border manor of Weston was defended by the castle of Whitchurch, and that of Meresburie by Oswestry.

Speed credits Shropshire with thirty-two castles, and these were mainly of Norman foundation. The majority of these have left no trace beyond the steep mound on which their keep stood. Shrewsbury and Ludlow, however, still remain—the one with a Norman gateway, the other with its round chapel and other fragments of Norman work. Probably the four fortresses mentioned in the *Domesday Book*—Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Montgomery, and Stanton (now Holgate)—were not buildings of a very permanent character, and were added to and altered considerably during the twelfth century.

We have no Norman house left in Shropshire. Roger de Montgomery built himself one at Quatford, and founded a church and castle there, but within fifty years it was eclipsed by Bridgnorth, and not even a portion of the church dates back to his day. Had this not been the case, we might perhaps have found there, as we do at Christchurch in Hampshire, a stately church, a Norman house, a small castle upon its mound, and a borough in their shadow, all standing together, as their founder intended them to be.

The Norman barons of Holgate built their castle near the Saxon Collegiate Church, and as the years went on they possibly added to the dignity of the sacred building as they added to the strength or comfort of their stronghold. Holgate Church possesses a very fine doorway of late Norman work, and an equally fine font of the same date. In 1109 Henry I. stayed at Holgate, and the castle must then have been a building of some pretensions; but now little remains but the lower portion of a round tower incorporated in a later farm-house. The great castle of Caus had its chapel within its walls, as had all the larger fortresses, but the smaller were content to be near the parish church.

The Normans were great church as well as castle builders. All four of the Shrewsbury parish churches bore traces of their handiwork, and the nave of the abbey church there still stands in its massive grandeur. There are few of the remaining village churches of early foundation that have no Norman work visible, and the twelfth century was an era of much church building. The beautiful chancel of Shifnal dates from the early, and that of Wroxeter from the late, twelfth century.

In addition to more or less stately parish churches, the Norman masons have left us several small chapels of beautiful proportions and good detail. One now in ruins is at Malins Lee, and another stands much as its builders left it, at the Heath, in the parish of Stoke St. Milborough.

The early thirteenth century saw this activity in building abated in Shropshire. Buildwas, Lilleshall, Haughmond, and Wombridge abbeys were all foundations of the twelfth century, though their buildings were altered, improved, and added to in later times, and there was no violent break between the styles of architecture. The pointed arch was developed for structural reasons from the round, but there is not very much Early English work to be found in Shropshire. It was a stormy time, and men had the Norman buildings still firm and strong. The church of Cleobury Mortimer contains good work of the early thirteenth century, as does also that of Chirbury. The former was near the castle of one of the most powerful barons of the time, and the other, though in an exposed position on the Welsh border, was under the protection of the lords of Montgomery.

The latter part of the thirteenth century saw the rise of town life and the decay of mere fortress-castles. Men began to build themselves manor-houses fortified by a moat and a wall which they "crenellated" by royal licence. Some fourteen of these "licences to crenellate" were granted for Shropshire houses during the period 1272-1399, between the accession of Edward I. and that of Henry IV. The earliest of these was that given in 1284 to Robert Burnel, Bishop of Bath and Wells and Lord Chancellor of England, to embattle his house of Acton Burnel, and the second was that granted to Lawrence de Ludlow, seven years later, for his mansion of Stokesay. At Acton Burnel we have the shell of the bishop's house remaining, with—some hundred yards away—the great gable ends of what is popularly called a barn (having possibly served that purpose in later times), but which is probably the remains of the earlier mansion house where Edward I. stayed with his Chancellor in 1283 for the purpose of holding the Parliament of Acton Burnel. Almost within the precincts of the castle of 1284 stands the church, one of the most beautiful thirteenth century buildings to be found among English churches, carefully restored and reverently kept. The bishop seems to have begun the church about 1260, and to have finished it some twenty years later, for there is a slight break in style between the chancel and the nave, though both are Early English of the thirteenth century. The manor-house is a quadrangular building, with a small courtyard. All the internal walls are gone, but it is possible to trace the great hall, which was over an undercroft, and some of the other rooms.

The present Hall is said to have grown up round the gatehouse of the bishop's mansion, and, if so, the precincts of the latter must have been of considerable extent. The churchyard was originally on the north side of the church, contrary to the usual custom, and probably the south side joined the outer precincts of the manor-house.

Stokesay is another notable example of late thirteenth century work. The hall still stands with its roof-timbers stained with the smoke of its brazier fire, and though the house was continuously inhabited from the time of Lawrence de Ludlow, or perhaps earlier, till the

STOKESAY CASTLE *North Side*

eighteenth century, generations have added to it without much alteration of the early work. The church at Stokesay stands just outside the precincts of the manor-house, but it suffered grievously during the troubles of the Civil Wars, and was largely rebuilt in 1654.

There seem to have been a number of important houses capable of being held against an enemy which never received the licence to crenellate. Shropshire abounds in moated sites, sometimes occupied by later buildings, sometimes lying desolate, with the more modern manor-house a short distance away. At Longnor, midway between Shrewsbury and Church Stretton, only mounds and broken ground show where once stood the house of the Sprenchose family, for the building of which in the early thirteenth century Roger Sprenchose had a grant of trees from the royal woodland at Womerton, near Stretton. The thirteenth century chapel still stands in the park beside the mill-pool a few yards from its site, and the mill, which was at work when the Conqueror came, still fulfils its task of grinding corn. Another trace of old days is left at Longnor in the Moat-house, which is mentioned in a deed of the thirteenth century. Within the moat is a small half-timbered house, part of which is of mediæval work, and the whole probably represents the buildings of an early farm.

Another moat-house in the neighbourhood is near Stapleton, but that was a more ambitious building, being the manor-house of the family of de Stapleton, who were of great importance during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and held Stapleton from the time of Stephen till the middle of the fifteenth century. Though the present buildings are later, they stand on the foundations and show the plan of the mediæval manor-house. On the south side of the moated enclosure stands the house, and on the other sides are the farm buildings, forming a quadrangle entered through a gatehouse on the eastern side. When the great gates were closed and barred in olden times the whole was capable of resisting a considerable force before the days of firearms. Unlike the majority of early manor-houses, the moat is a considerable distance from a church. Stapleton Church is a mile away, near a mound which may have been the site of a Saxon house, or was a meeting-place in the forest which for a century after the Conquest stretched across the country. The church is of early thirteenth century date, and is remarkable as having once been in two stories. Possibly the lower portion was intended for use as a storehouse, which might be safe, under the protection of the church, from the marauders that were only too numerous in those days. Perhaps the oldest inhabited house in the county is that of Upper Millichope, once the residence of the Forester of the Long Forest, within the bounds of which Stapleton lay.

Binweston, near Worthen, the old home of the Kerry family, is another moated house, and in the woodland that lay in Pontesbury parish, but near Shrewsbury, are three or four houses that retain their moats.

At Pitchford, as at Longnor, the church and manor-house stood together; but while the church dates from the early thirteenth century, the present house does not go back further than the close of the fifteenth. Aston Aer also retains its twelfth century church, founded by Robert Fitz Aer, but the house of the Fitz Aers is now incorporated in farm buildings, and the gateway forms the nucleus of a modern house.

With the exception of those for Acton Burnel, Stokesay, and the now vanished Warranshall, near Moreton Say, all the Shropshire licences to crenellate are of fourteenth century date; but of these only Cheney Longville, near Wistanstow, remains, and that in a much altered condition. It is moated, and, like the moat-house at Stapleton, the buildings rose out of the moat and surround a courtyard entered by an arched gateway. The lower portion of the work of 1395 remains, but the roof is modern.

Apley Castle, Sheriff Hales, Whitchurch, Dawley, the Charltons' mansions at Shrewsbury and Withiford, have all disappeared. A few fragments are to be seen of the house of Austin Friars at Shrewsbury, crenellated in 1344, and a crumbling turret staircase still stands at Middle, where John le Strange in 1307 built his castle. Tong, crenellated by Fulk Pembruge in 1381, was rebuilt in 1500 by Sir Harry Vernon, and his house was in turn masked by modern building about 1765.

Ludlow Castle was repaired and strengthened by Roger Mortimer in the time of Edward II., but later suffered considerably during the Wars of the Roses, and needed some additions before, under Edward IV., it became the seat of the Court of the Marches. Vaughan's mansion in Shrewsbury, though hidden by later building, still retains its hall of the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century date, but it is the only remnant of the early mansions of the town, except a few fragments of Cole Hall, used as a stable and a workshop, and the picturesque corner of Bennett Hall known as the "Old Mint."

Many of the more stately Shropshire churches contain fourteenth century work, especially in their chancels, and the church of Neen Sollars is wholly of this date, as is its neighbour at Nash. The latter is a very simple building, by no means so picturesque as the little cruciform church at Neen Sollars, with its spire rising among the cherry orchards. The magnificent church at Ludlow is mainly of the fourteenth century, with the addition in the following century of the tower and the east end of the chancel and its fittings. Possibly its grandeur is to some extent owing to the patronage of the Mortimers, though probably more to the generosity of the burgesses of the town, as the burgesses of Newport enlarged their church at this date without the aid of a resident lord. The Mortimer family seem to have enlarged the church of their town of Cleobury in the fourteenth century by a north aisle; and the Mortimers of Chelmarsh in 1345 built the chancel and nave of the church there, which remains to this day a beautiful example of Decorated architecture.

Albrighton, Claverley, Shifnal, and Worfield, on the east of the county, and Clungunford, Berrington, and Pontesbury, on the west, all have chancels of the fourteenth century; and at Hughley, once a manor of the Mortimers, the whole church dates from this period; while in many earlier churches we find Decorated windows inserted. At Stanton Lacy and at Wrockwardine the upper part of the tower is of fourteenth century date, but the majority of our Shropshire towers are Perpendicular work.

Kinlet has transepts and chancel built at this time, when the Mortimers, Earls of March, had an interest in the manor; so it seems possible that the work may be due to some band of masons specially patronised by them. The chancel and south aisle of Stottesden Church are perhaps the most beautiful example of Decorated work in the county, and they were probably built about 1340, when John de Seagrave was lord of the manor, through whose daughter and heiress the estates passed to the Dukes of Norfolk.

The fifteenth century saw the rise of half-timbered houses and the prevalence of Perpendicular forms in architecture.

Pitchford Hall is said to go back in part to 1475, though this is perhaps doubtful; and the fine corner house of Butcher Row in Shrewsbury dates from the close of this century, and to this day shows the original arrangement of the shops on the ground floor. The house on the Wyle Cop where Henry of Richmond slept in 1485 still stands to show how well men built in the fifteenth century; and probably there are several smaller houses scattered about the county equally old. The house now known as the "Small House," at Condover, is a good specimen of a country house of about this date; and part, certainly, of Coton, near Hodnet, goes back to the latter part of the century. The prior's lodging at Much Wenlock is a most interesting example of fifteenth century stonework, and consisted originally of sets of chambers opening on to a covered gallery.

The builders of the fifteenth century have left us in Shropshire many good timber roofs, like that of Alberbury Church and the more simple one at Ford. Tasley and Ford possess screens of simple design; Hughley, Lydbury North, and Bettws-y-Crwyn more elaborate ones; and many churches, like Ditton Priors, show fragments of a fifteenth century rood screen worked up in later woodwork.

Tong is a perfect example of a church of the early fifteenth century. It was built about 1410 by Elizabeth de Pembruge in memory of her husband, and, with the exception of the Vernon chapel built in 1515, the fabric remains much as she left it on her death in 1447. The beautiful screen-work is probably a little later than her day, but we know that much of the woodwork in Ludlow Church was carved in 1447.

The church of Battlefield was built about 1409 by Roger Ive, of Leaton, Rector of Albright Hussey and of Fitz, as that of a college of five chaplains and a warden, who were to daily pray for the souls of those slain in the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403. Dame Elizabeth Pembruge's church was also collegiate. Her college of Tong was for five priests (one of whom was the warden) and thirteen poor, seven of whom should be those too infirm to help themselves. Unlike Tong, the church of Battlefield fell into ruin, and when in 1861 it was restored as it now stands many of the details needed to be added by the modern architect.

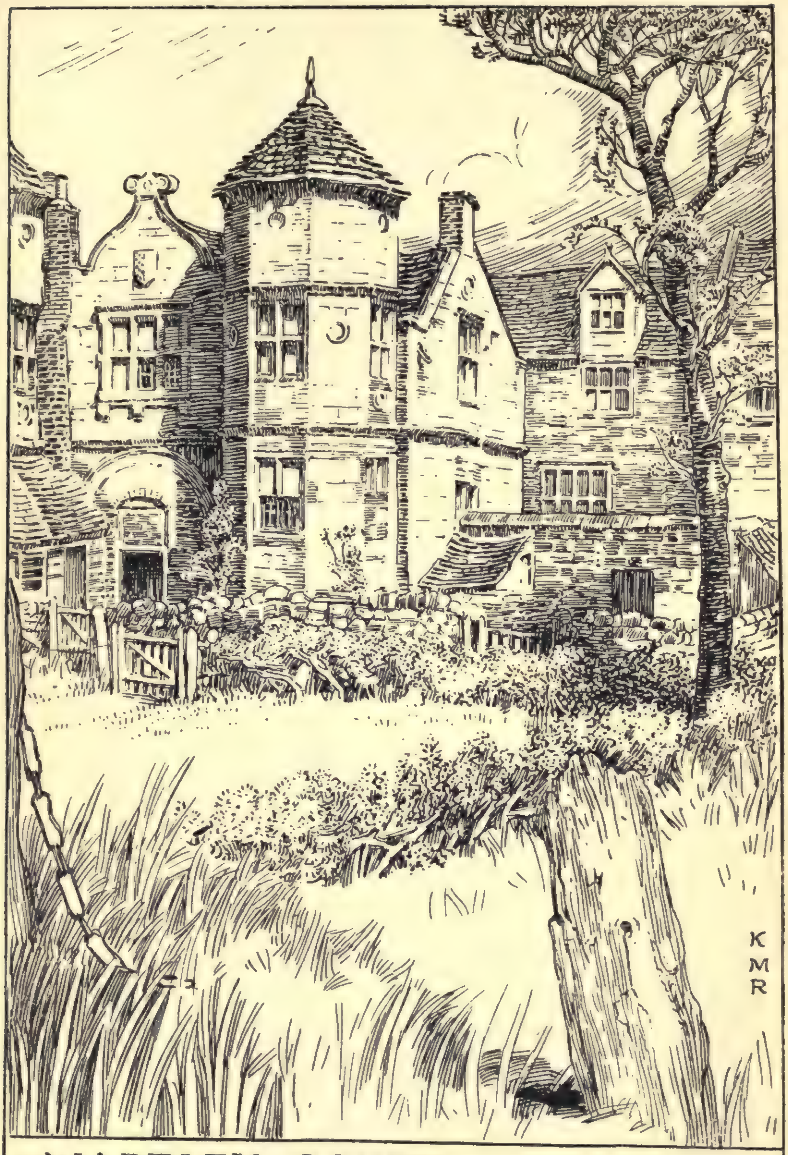
Both at Tong and Battlefield the buildings of the college have wholly disappeared, but at Tong there are still at the west end of the church a few fragments of the fifteenth century hospital of the college.

The half-timbered church of Melverley is an interesting example of fifteenth century work; and Trelystan church, on the Long Mountain, once in the parish of Worthen, although in the county of Montgomery, is of similar work, and almost equally picturesque.

The great glory of fifteenth century architecture is its towers, and nearly every stately tower in Shropshire dates from the second half of the fifteenth or the first half of the sixteenth century. The tower of Battlefield was finished in 1503; the splendid tower of Ludlow a little earlier; while those of Church Stretton, Claverley, Edgmond, Upton Magna, Shawbury, are only a few of those to be found scattered up and down the county.

The tower of St. Leonard's, Bridgnorth, was rebuilt on the old lines of the one dating from 1468; and the spire of Worfield is of similar date. Ellesmere Church has a good deal of work of this century, and the Abbey Church at Shrewsbury has many Perpendicular features, including the great west window. The spire of St. Alkmund's is wholly fifteenth century work; while at St. Mary's and St. Julian's an upper storey of this date crowns earlier work. This is the case with several other towers, and the ambition of fifteenth century builders which prompted them to place a lofty superstructure on earlier work not intended originally to bear so great a weight is responsible for the fall of more than one building. It is not improbable that this had to do with the fall of the church of Whitchurch, as a drawing of the church before 1710 shows a very fine fifteenth century central tower; and possibly also with that of Condover in 1660, as there is a tradition of a central tower there which in its fall crushed the nave and north aisle.

The sixteenth century was one of peace and prosperity throughout England. Wealth increased in all ranks, especially among the middle classes, and comfort was more considered than in early days. Squires and merchants, yeomen and tradesmen of every degree, built themselves houses fitted for the new luxuries, and there is hardly a town or parish in Shropshire that cannot show a house, larger or smaller, of this date. In Shrewsbury a



MADELEY COURT :

fine half-timbered house at the corner of Princess Street and the Square is dated 1570, and the equally fine Owen's mansion bears the date 1592. A now much plastered house at the bottom of the Wyle Cop was standing in 1573, when it belonged to Thomas Sherar, Clerk of the Court of the Marches. The "Olde House" on Dogpole belonged to an earlier official of the Court, one of the Rocke family, and the Princess Mary Tudor is said to have stayed there when on her way to Ludlow Castle, where she resided in state.

The White Hall is another Shrewsbury house of the sixteenth century, finished in 1582. The old market hall, so familiar an object to all who know Shrewsbury, was finished in 1596; and the fine half-timbered market-house at Much Wenlock is possibly a little earlier in date.

Wellington possessed an equally fine market-house in 1804, but it has now disappeared, as has the similar one at Church Stretton.

It would take up these pages unduly to enumerate all the sixteenth century country houses still remaining in Salop

Benthall, near Broseley, and Belswardine date from the first half of the century; Madeley Court and Elsich from about the middle; and Acton Scott, Upton Cressett, Condover, Shipton, and Wilderhope from the close. Park Hall is a magnificent example of a half-timbered front of 1555, and Marrington Hall of 1595. The house at Bridgnorth where Bishop Percy was born in 1728 bears the date 1580, and there is a fine half-timbered house at Dunvall of about the same date.

Condover Hall is the finest of the stone houses of this date in the county. It was built between 1586 and 1598, and is a very perfect specimen of the time.

The brick mansion of Lutwyche Hall has the date 1581, but is later in some details than Condover. Like Orleton, near Wellington, it bears considerable traces of alterations and additions of the eighteenth century.

The White Hall, near Shrewsbury, already alluded to, was in process of building in 1578, when Richard Prince bought fifteen hundred oak trees from Acton Scott for use in its construction.

Moreton Corbet, now only a picturesque ruin, bears the date 1578 in one place, but has traces of building of both earlier and later years. Boscobel, well known from its associations with Charles II., was built at the close of the sixteenth century or the very beginning of the seventeenth; and Plowden Hall is about the same date. In both houses hiding-places were deliberately planned that they might afford refuge to the persecuted Roman priests whom Elizabethan law pronounced guilty of high treason since the Pope had declared the Queen to be illegitimate and a usurper of the English throne.

In the days when banks did not exist and there were few opportunities for investing money, provision was often made for secret cupboards, and these are to be found in smaller houses of this date quite as frequently as in larger ones.

The number of Elizabethan farm-houses scattered over the county is a striking witness to the prosperity of the country under "Good Queen Bess," and several of these contain cupboards in unexpected places, where valuables could be stored. Many of these houses were built by the owners of small estates for their own use, as, for instance, Alderton, near Shrawardine, the house of the Heylins, and later of the Wingfields, where some panelling bears the date 1591. Moat Hall, once the home of the Berrington family, is a picturesque example of a smaller manor-house, and contains some good panelling.

In the sixteenth century the era of church-building had passed, and, except some towers, and a few windows inserted to give the light required by the service of the English Prayer-book, our churches bear few marks of that period. The tower of Wroxeter Church is remarkable as having been built after the dissolution of the Abbey of

Haughmond in 1535, and has many carved stones from it worked into its walls.

The despoiling of churches in the reign of Edward VI. was not carried out so drastically in Salop as in some other counties, and if the sixteenth century did not give us much in the way of Church architecture, it did not take away so much as in some districts.

From an] [*Old Engraving.*

BOSCOBEL.

We lost, however, the buildings of five great abbeys and several lesser religious houses. The three churches of the friars in Shrewsbury, two in Ludlow, one in Bridgnorth, and one at Woodhouse, near Cleobury Mortimer, were swept away, and more than one foundation for the poor and infirm shared the same fate.

During the concluding years of the century a few churches received alterations and additions. The chancel of the little church of Shipton was built in 1589; and the roof of Shifnal Church was renewed after a disastrous fire in 1591. Several early parish books record work done to churches at this period, but it seems generally to have consisted of whitewashing or painting texts on the walls.

The little half-timbered church of Halston is of later date, and of seventeenth rather than sixteenth century work.

The seventeenth century saw a change in the fashion of building. The early part connects itself with the time of Elizabeth, and the houses of that date are very similar to those of the sixteenth century; whilst those built in the time of returned prosperity after the Civil Wars are of the comfortable solid red-brick type familiar throughout the eighteenth century.

Habberley Hall, Greet Court, and Stanwardine, near Baschurch, are apparently of the early part of the seventeenth century. Whitton Hall, near Ludlow, is said to date from this century, but it embodies much earlier work; as does also Plash Hall, which was re-modelled by Judge William Leighton, who died in 1607. Some part of Stokesay Castle bears traces of the time when Lord Craven is said to have prepared it as a retreat for the "Queen of Hearts," the widowed Countess Palatine, daughter of James I.

Ludstone Hall, dated 1607, is practically Elizabethan in style. Loton, built partly in 1630, shows a many-gabled garden front, somewhat similar to Chetwynd, where Charles I. stayed in 1645. Pool Hall, near Alveley, shows the same picturesque gables at the back, though the front is eighteenth century work. High Ercall, built in 1608, also shows a gabled front. Braggington, near Alberbury, bears the date 1674 on its porch, but its style and plan are of the early seventeenth century; and Petsey, near Hodnet, which is dated 1634, seems not to be all of one date.

There was little building done during the Commonwealth, either of private or public edifices, excepting in a few cases in the towns.

The resources of the Royalists and Parliamentarians alike were exhausted by the war, and though much property changed hands, the new owners were generally content with the houses of their predecessors. Gough, in his *History of Middle*, mentions that Sir Vincent Corbet was so heavily fined for his loyalty to the King that he sold several lands, among them a very good farm at Preston Brockhurst, which was bought by "Mr. Wingfield, of Shrewsbury, who pulled down the hall and built there a fair hall of freestone." This house still stands, and shows that the traditions of the Elizabethan builders were still followed.

The Old Schools (now the Free Library) at Shrewsbury were partially built in 1617, and finished about 1630; and the house built at Grinshill as a country school-house in time of plague of any kind was erected about 1624, but they are later in general feeling than many buildings of similar date.

The Town Hall of Bridgnorth was rebuilt during the Commonwealth to replace the one destroyed in the siege, which had stood outside the walls of the town. The burgesses, being much impoverished by the wars, did the work as economically as possible, and bought the materials of an old barn to help them in their building, which, after four years' work, was finished in 1652.

There was a considerable amount of church-building during the seventeenth century, and in Shropshire generally the forms of the Gothic builders were retained throughout the period. Some of the work might be taken for that of the fourteenth century until the shallowness of the mouldings and the comparative thinness of the walls is noticed.

Langley Chapel, near Acton Burnell, has fittings of the early seventeenth century, and possibly the fabric of the building is also of late date. The Communion Table is brought out from the east wall, and all round is a seat and a desk for kneeling. The reading pew is also of curious design, with a wooden canopy.

The west window of Church Stretton Church was given in 1619 by Mrs. Jane Norton, who in her will in 1640 left a rent for keeping in repair the "west windowe and seats adjoyning in the west end of the Churche of Stretton (which it pleased GOD to give me leave to build)."

Many churches possess woodwork of this century, but often only in the form of pews, which have of necessity given way to seats more fitted for worship and less for somnolence.

There are a goodly number of Jacobean pulpits, some exceedingly well carved and all interesting. Great Ness has Altar table and rails of this date, and Pitchford has an interesting pulpit and pews. The chancel of Bromfield has a wonderful painted plaster ceiling of 1672 covered with coats of arms of almost unique design.

The Civil Wars brought partial ruin to several churches, as, for instance, High Ercall, which now consists of seventeenth century walls built between 1657-1662 to fit in with arcades of twelfth century work, with a good seventeenth century tower. Shrawardine was ruined during the siege of the neighbouring castle, and shows patched walls and a roof of 1650. Stokesay Church had a similar experience, and was partially rebuilt in 1654, and apparently finished some ten years later.

The north aisle of St. Mary's, Shrewsbury, was rebuilt during the Commonwealth on the old Gothic lines, but not on the same foundations as the mediæval aisle.

The nave and tower of Condover Church are perhaps the finest example of seventeenth century church-building in Salop. They date from 1661, when they were erected on the site of the earlier nave and north aisle which fell down in November, 1660. The oak roof of great span is a remarkable feature, and the whole building recalls a college hall rather than an ecclesiastical building. The tower was finished a few years later than the nave, though its architectural features are those of the fourteenth century.

The little church of Benthall, built in 1667 to replace the church nearer the hall destroyed in the Civil Wars, has less Gothic feeling than the work at Condover, and the quaint little church of Minsterley, dating from the close of the seventeenth or early years of the eighteenth century, is wholly Renaissance in character.

After the Revolution, when the country settled down and prosperity returned to the leading families, the fashion of houses had changed, and men followed the lines of the formal Dutch style.

The Isle, near Shrewsbury, shows well the sequence of building that took place in the case of many manor-houses. There is there the moated site of the first house, built in a strong position overlooking the Severn, with the little chapel beside it; then on another site was the unfortified Elizabethan house, with its half-timbered gables; and, later, beside this was built about 1680 the present many-windowed red-brick house, all straight lines, with long panelled rooms, and far more bedroom accommodation than was considered necessary in the sixteenth century, when ideas on the subject were still, to modern thought, somewhat primitive.

Shavington, built about 1679, is another house more roomy than beautiful; and Aldenham, almost rebuilt in 1697, has small pretensions to beauty; but Longnor, built by Sir Richard Corbet in 1688, is of picturesque design; while Court of Hill, near Ludlow, and Halston, once the home of Jack Mytton, have the charm of solidity and comfort. Cound Hall, which bears the date 1706, is of very similar design, and an equally substantial building. Soulton Hall, near Wem, though it bears the date of 1681, is of earlier design as a whole, and the date probably refers simply to the elaborate doorway.

Shrewsbury and Ludlow and the other Shropshire towns possess good examples of substantial houses of the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries, and there are several smaller country houses of this date, such as Whitton, near Westbury, which have all the comfort that modern owners can wish. Sometimes, as at Fitz Manor, the pleasant, well-lighted panelled rooms have been added to the substantial, but rather cramped, building of earlier date; and at Berrington the fine half-timbered Hall near the church has a seventeenth century brick addition at the side.

There is little break in general style between the work of the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries. Hardwick, near Ellesmere, built in 1733, Sandford in 1720, Davenport in 1727 (in the place of the old house of Hallon), Kinlet in 1729, the Lodge (near Ludlow) in 1721, Buntingsdale in 1731, and Berwick (near Shrewsbury) about 1740, are all good examples of the time adapted to the requirements of our present everyday life. There are less notable houses of the same date in every part of the county, like Ford House and several houses in Shrewsbury and the other towns, with stately oak staircases and pleasant panelled rooms.

Henley, near Ludlow, dates from 1772; Hatton Grange, near Shifnal, from some twenty years earlier; Leighton Hall, near Ironbridge, from 1778, and Lythwood from 1782. Attingham and Brogyntyn are stately classic houses of the close of the eighteenth century, and Tong Castle, as it now stands, is of similar date.

The eighteenth century was in its own way an era of church-building. Whitchurch Church is a dignified and well-proportioned building of about 1710. Fitz is a good specimen of brickwork of 1721, and Leighton an example of Georgian work of about 1716, following the lines of an earlier church. Great Bolas was finished in 1729, and Moreton Say was cased with brick somewhat later. In 1734 briefs were issued for the re-building of the churches of Longdon-on-Tern and Eyton-upon-the-Wild-Moors. Montford Church was rebuilt in 1736, and Petton in 1727, though it contains a pulpit bearing the date 1635. Preston-on-the-Wild-Moors Church, as well as the adjacent hospital for aged women, both date from the first half of the eighteenth century. Indeed there is hardly a church remaining in the county that does not bear some trace of this century either in its fabric or its fittings; but modern hands have swept away the coved ceilings, baize-lined pews, and much plaster and whitewash. The "Churchwarden" windows have given place to restorations of mediæval work, and the "three-deckers" are now things of the past.

The close of the century was a terrible time of vandalism. Shrewsbury had seen the nave of St. Julian's Church rebuilt in 1749 on the ground that the old church had become ruinous; and in 1798 it saw the fall of the central tower of old St. Chad's and the demolition of the ruins. This was followed by the rebuilding of St. Alkmund's on the ground of economy, urged by not disinterested parishioners.

St. Mary Magdalen's, Bridgnorth, was rebuilt in 1792 after a design of Telford, the engineer; and the church of Wellington in 1790; while in 1796 the church where the saintly Fletcher of Madeley preached was replaced by the present edifice.

There were a large number of Nonconformist chapels licensed in the second half of the eighteenth century, but as a rule their architecture was of a very simple description, and several have been replaced in modern times by more ambitious edifices.

A vivid picture of the treatment to which old churches were subjected by eighteenth century builders may be gathered from the history of Market Drayton. At a vestry meeting in 1786 "it was agreed to remove the roofs of the aisles and cover them with slates; to take down the west end of the south aisle, and as much of the south wall as was between the west end and the south porch, and to raise the walls four feet. A large doorway was made in the tower, and two smaller ones at the east end; the north and south porches were taken down and the doorways walled up, and sixteen new windows of uniform design inserted." The transformation into blank ugliness can be imagined without the aid of the sketches furnished to demonstrate the "improvement."

The early nineteenth century saw less brick work and more stone, or, failing stone, stucco.

Willey Hall was built about 1815, and Onslow about 1820, and there are many smaller houses of about the same date. Sundorne Castle and Apley Park are examples of the beginning of the revival of Gothic ideas, and Rowton Castle has work of the same period added to earlier building.

There was little change in style till quite modern days, which do not come within the scope of this sketch, and antiquaries of the future will find considerable difficulty in assigning a date to much nineteenth century building. Netley Hall, for instance, built in 1857, might well be dated some fifty years earlier from its general design.

Church-building sank to its lowest ebb about 1815. The early eighteenth century buildings had been honest brickwork, but much of the early nineteenth was stucco and plaster, which fell out of repair almost in the lifetime of its builders. About 1830 began a feeling after mediæval ideals, but it was several years before it really bore fruit; and its result is too modern to come into a paper on "Old Shropshire."

H. M. AUDEN.

ILLUSTRIOUS SALOPIANS

BY THE EDITOR

THIS is a difficult chapter to write. The difficulty does not arise from want of material, either as regards the number of those whose doings might claim insertion, or as regards the details of their lives. It lies in the selection of those most suitable for the purposes of the book. A large number of Illustrious Salopians have been already mentioned incidentally in the course of the volume, and it would be easy to mention many more names of men distinguished in almost every walk of life, but the alternative would be either to conduct the reader through a valley of dry bones, or to extend the chapter to an excessive length. All that can be done is to point out various directions in which men of the county have specially distinguished themselves, giving more in detail the careers of those who appear specially representative.

To begin with pursuits in which Salopians have achieved least distinction, it must be confessed that in what are known as the Fine Arts those who have attained eminence are not very numerous. In the latter half of the eighteenth century two painters, father and son, attained considerable local celebrity, but were not much known outside of the county. These were James Bowen, who died in 1774, and John, his son, who died in 1832. Views of Shrewsbury from their hands are among the most interesting and valuable of the old engravings of the town; and the painters merit a brief notice here from the fact that both of them were antiquaries as well as painters, the father being probably the real author of the *History of Shrewsbury* published in 1779 under the name of Phillips.

Contemporary with the younger Bowen was a Shropshire painter more widely known, but now largely forgotten. This was William Owen, born in 1769. In his earlier life he was encouraged by the favourable notice of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and he became R.A. in 1806. In 1813 he was appointed principal portrait-painter to the Prince Regent, who offered him knighthood. He died in 1824.

Another artist of the same name, better known locally, flourished a little later. This was the Rev. Edward Pryce Owen, son of Archdeacon Hugh Owen, one of the authors of Owen and Blakeway's *History of Shrewsbury*. Born in 1788, and educated at Cambridge, he was for some years Vicar of Wellington, Salop. Some of his etchings adorn the *History* just mentioned, and the volume containing the complete collection commands a considerable price.

Probably, however, the best-known of Shropshire artists is John Boydell, whose long life (1719-1804) almost coincided with the eighteenth century. Born at Stanton-on-Hine-Heath, near Wem, he forsook the business of land-surveying, for which he was originally intended, and apprenticed himself to an engraver in London. About the middle of the century he set up as an engraver and print-seller on his own account, and met with such success that he not only gained a considerable fortune, but by his patronage of others gave a great stimulus to art. In 1782 he became an alderman of the city of London, and after being elected a sheriff three years later, became Lord Mayor in 1790. His desire, however, to encourage art, and his previous success in that direction, led him to undertake a work which was beyond his powers. He commissioned the leading artists of the time to paint pictures illustrating the works of Shakespeare, and built a Shakespeare Gallery for their exhibition. The engravings were used in a fine edition of the Dramatist, published in 1802; but the expense which Boydell had incurred in his scheme was enormous, and as the convulsions on the Continent following the French Revolution had largely destroyed his other business, he found himself in financial difficulties. To escape from these he applied to the Government for permission to dispose of his property by means of a lottery. Permission was granted, but before it was carried out the old man died, on December 12th, 1804, at the age of eighty-five years, leaving a character for generosity in the use of his wealth of which Salopians may well be proud.

If we turn to the sister art of music, it must be confessed that the record is a very meagre one. Salopians, as contrasted with the inhabitants of many other English counties, as well as the Welsh just over the border, are not a musical race, and the county has produced few musicians of any eminence. Perhaps the most distinguished was Henry John Gauntlett, and he lived in comparatively recent times. His father, who was Vicar of Olney, was a friend of Rowland Hill, and the musician was born at Wellington, Salop, in 1805. He filled in succession the post of organist at more than one well-known church in London, and edited various musical works. Several of his hymn tunes are still popular, and find a place in most collections. He died in 1876.

An earlier and better known Shropshire musician is Dr. Charles Burney, father of Madame D'Arblay, and author of the *History of Music*. He was born in 1726 at Shrewsbury, where the entry of his baptism is to be found as "Charles Macburny" in the Register Book of St. Mary's parish. He spent most of his childhood at Condover, but received his earlier musical education partly in Chester and partly in Shrewsbury, completing it in London under Dr. Arne. For some years he was organist at King's Lynn, but he afterwards filled a similar post at Chelsea Hospital, where he died in 1814. He was author of various books of travels, but his most important work was the *History of Music*, which occupied several years in publication, and is still a standard work.

When we turn to poetry, the county has a better record to show. Allusion has already been made to three Shropshire poets of mediæval times, John Audelay, John Mirk, and William Langland; and when we come to the sixteenth century we encounter another who was not only born in the county, but made it the subject of his verses. It would be absurd to call Thomas Churchyard a great poet, for some of his effusions are bald to the last degree; but he is worthy of mention as one who was honoured with the notice of Spenser, though he blamed him for writing too much. Born in 1520 at Shrewsbury, the eighty-four years of his life were full of ups and downs, a considerable portion being spent as a soldier of fortune, in which capacity he saw service in most of the wars of the time. He appears to have been a restless spirit, who was constant to scarcely anything except the use of his pen, by which he produced more than sixty separate books, varying in length from pamphlets to quarto volumes, some in prose and some in verse. The principal local allusions are to be found in his *Worthines of Wales*, published in 1587, and dedicated to Queen Elizabeth. It contains at considerable length a description of the streets and buildings of Shrewsbury, and, apart from poetry, is valuable as a contemporary record.[1] The general level of his poetry may be illustrated from another volume, published eight years earlier, entitled the *Miserie of Flaunders, Calamitie of Fraunce, Misfortune of Portugall, Unquietnes of Irelande, Troubles of Scotlande, and The Blessed State of England.* Apropos to the last item he says:—

This Ile is Kirnell of the nutte
And those that neare us dwell,
Our forraine neighbours rounde about,
I count them but the shell.

With this excellent sentiment he may be left to the reader to study for himself.

Passing to the seventeenth century, we find Shropshire producing better poetry but much worse sentiment. William Wycherley, born at The Clive, near Wem, about 1640, was one of the dramatists of the Restoration period, and shared their faults to the full. Intended for the law and educated at Oxford, he forsook his profession at an early period and became a man about town, where his ready wit and handsome person secured him success; but his career was by no means one for imitation. He married a young widow, the Countess of Drogheda, but the marriage was unhappy, and after her death he fell into pecuniary difficulties, and spent some years in the Fleet prison. He wrote four comedies, of which *The Plain Dealer* was the last and best; and it is said that James II., having seen this, was so pleased that he paid his debts and gave him a pension. He died in 1704. His plays were very popular in their day; but, though clever, they are artificial in their view of life, and to a modern reader are stupid as well as coarse—comedies of manners, and those manners bad.

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[1] *Cf.* the author's *Shrewsbury*, pp. 249-252.

Wycherley was contemporary with Farquhar, who was so far connected with Shropshire that he wrote his play of *The Recruiting Officer* while staying at Shrewsbury; but he was also contemporary with another writer who, like himself, was probably Salopian born. This was Thomas, or, as he was usually called, Tom Brown. He was born near Shifnal in 1663, and educated at Newport Grammar School, from which he passed in 1678 to Christ Church, Oxford. Here he soon fell into irregular habits, and was threatened with expulsion by the Dean, Dr. Fell, but is said to have been spared in consequence of his epigram:

I do not love thee, Dr. Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell;
But this I know, and know full well,
I do not love thee, Dr. Fell.

He left Oxford, however, without a degree, and betook himself to London to live by his pen. His writings cover a large field both of prose and verse, and show not only wit, but learning. They are, however, everywhere tainted with indecency and scurrility. There were few of his contemporary writers whom he did not lampoon, including Dryden, Sherlock, and the authors of the old version of the Psalms, Sternhold and Hopkins. His personal life was on a par with his writings, much of his time being spent in a low tavern in The Minories; but on his death, in the same year as that of Wycherley, he was honoured with a burial in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey.

We pass over about half a century and we come to another Salopian poet, inferior indeed in genius to those already mentioned, but of much higher moral character. This was Ambrose Phillips, who was a friend of Addison, and who provoked the enmity of Pope. The entry of his baptism is to be found in the Register Book of St. Alkmund's Church, Shrewsbury, under the date October 9th, 1674, and he was educated at Shrewsbury School, passing from thence to St. John's College, Cambridge. He afterwards spent some years in Ireland, and sat as member for Armagh in the Irish Parliament. He died in 1748. After the fashion of his age he wrote *Pastorals*, whose shepherds and shepherdesses were absolutely unreal; but though his works are wholly neglected now, there is genuine poetical feeling to be found in them. Some of his other poems, addressed to all sorts of people in the way of compliment, provoked a considerable amount of ridicule from some of his contemporaries, particularly Pope, and they procured for him a nick-name which has become a recognized English word—namely, "Namby Pamby."

Another writer of the Pastoral School who was contemporary with Ambrose Phillips, but slightly younger, belonged to old Shropshire, though he could not be claimed as Salopian if he were living now. It has been already mentioned in connection with the Abbey of Halesowen that it stood in a detached portion of this county now transferred to Worcestershire. In the same parish was a small estate known as "The Leasowes," and here, in 1714, was born William Shenstone. The estate belonged to his father, and in due time descended to himself. Here he spent his life, which he devoted mainly to laying out and improving its grounds. In the ponderous words of Johnson, he made it his employment "to point his prospects, to diversify his surface, to entangle his walks, and to wind his waters, which he did with such judgment and fancy as made his little domain the envy of the great and the admiration of the skilful: a place to be visited by travellers and copied by strangers." "The Leasowes" became celebrated, and in all the old Gazetteers of Shropshire, whatever else is omitted, the reader may be sure of finding several pages devoted to the description of Shenstone's landscape garden. He is probably known even now quite as much by his ornamental grounds as by his poems or his essays; but his *Schoolmistress*, in which he describes his own early experiences, is still sometimes read. In his later years his excessive expenditure on his estate brought him into pecuniary difficulties, and he sank into a disappointed and querulous old man. He died in 1763.

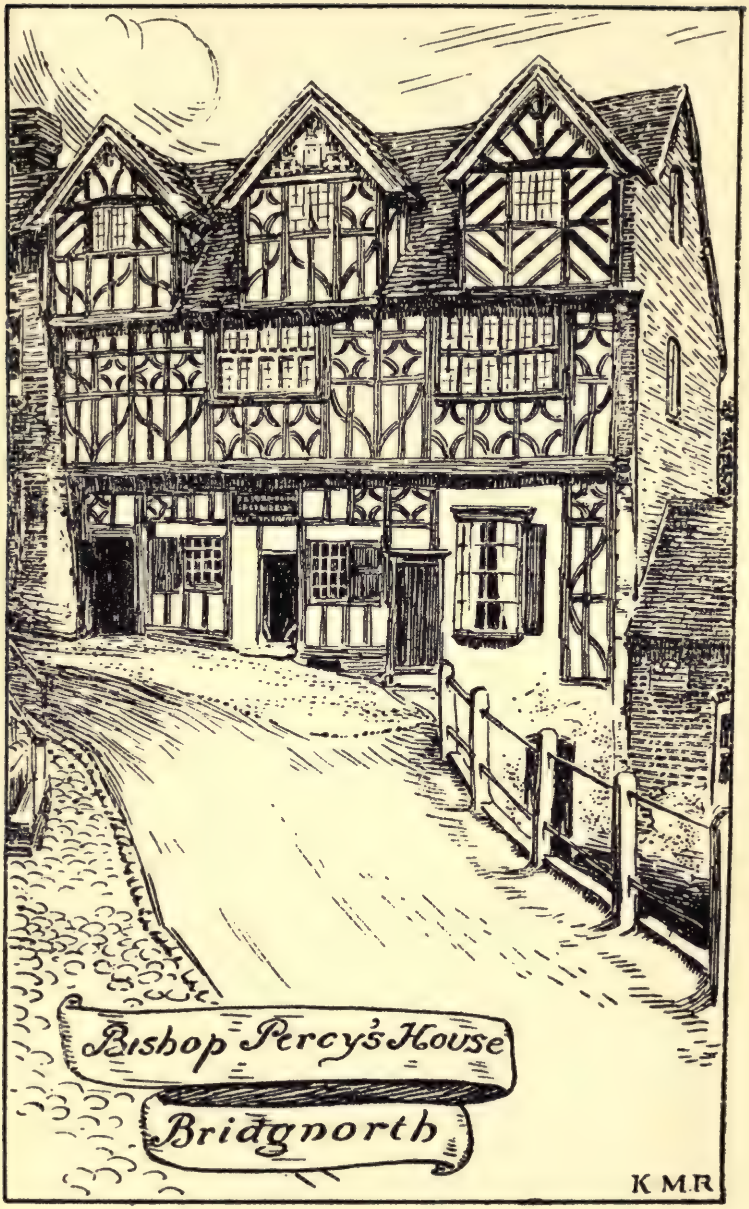
Space will not permit more than a mention of the poetry of Bishop Heber, who was Rector of Hodnet before he became Bishop of Calcutta. His sudden death in India in 1826 cut short a career that had already yielded good fruit and was still full of promise. Some of his hymns are among the most popular in the language.

Allusion should also be made, in passing, to J. F. M. Dovaston, who was almost entirely identified with the county, and was the author of a volume of poetry, *Fitz Gwarine and other Poems*, as well as other works which were extensively known in their day, and contain many local allusions. He inherited a small estate at West Felton from his father, who had been a friend of

Shenstone, and here he found his happiness in the study of nature, and literature associated with it, till his death in 1854. One other poet demands mention—namely, John Moultrie, born at Cleobury Mortimer in 1799, where his father was Vicar. He was educated at Eton, and after his ordination became Rector of Rugby, a post he filled for many years, dying in 1874. His poems are largely autobiographical, and contain many local allusions. Some will recognize, for example, his description of Cleobury Mortimer:

Tranquil town:—
Grey, venerable church with steeple white
Up tapering to the dim and distant sky—
Church in whose gothic aisles I first beheld
And joined, as childhood could, the solemn forms
Of Christian worship.

In the sister art of the actor, Shropshire also makes but a poor show. It is said, indeed, that Will Summers, the jester of Henry VIII., was a Shropshire man; but whether this were so or not, the county certainly produced a little later one of the first who distinguished himself in the acting of low comedy. This was Dick Tarleton, a native of Condover, who added to his natural possession of a strong comic vein the attraction of a comic expression, enhanced by a broken nose. He was introduced to the Court by one of the servants of the Earl of Leicester, whose notice he had attracted while engaged in feeding his father's pigs; and he was appointed by Queen Elizabeth one of her twelve special players, whose duty it was to amuse Her Majesty, especially during meals. He became a great favourite, and, in the words of Fuller, "when the Queen was serious and out of good humour, he could undumpish her at his pleasure. In a word, he told the Queen more of her faults than most of her chaplains; and cured her melancholy more than all her physicians." For some time he kept a tavern in Gracechurch Street, performing from time to time at the Curtain Theatre,


Bishop Percy's House
Bridgnorth
K M R

Shoreditch. He died suddenly—apparently of the plague—in 1588, and was buried at Shoreditch Church.

The only Salopian who achieved distinction in tragedy belongs to more modern times, William Henry West Betty, familiarly known as the "Young Roscius," who was born at Shrewsbury in 1791. His popularity arose from his extreme youth, for he made his first appearance as an actor before he was twelve. His characters were mostly heroic, including Hamlet, Macbeth, and other creations of Shakespeare; and for a while the fashionable world ran after him. After a retirement of some years he returned to the stage, but his success as a man was not great, and in 1824 he went back into private life, enjoying the fortune he had made till his death in 1874 at the age of eighty-two years.

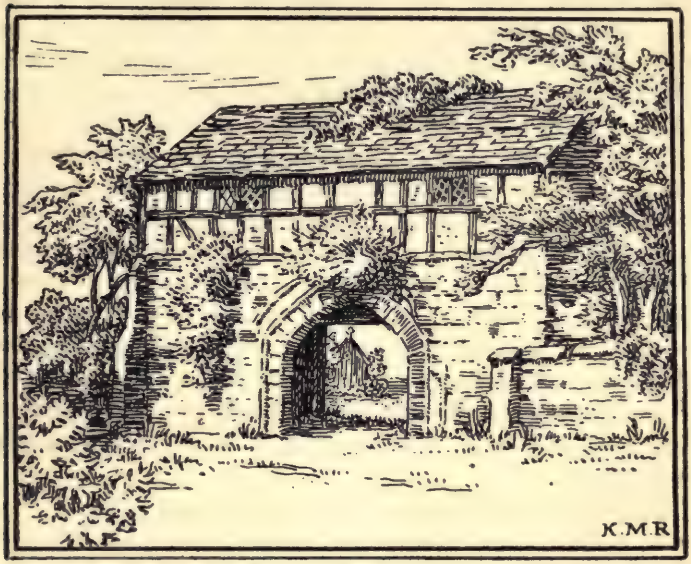
When we turn to the record of distinguished ecclesiastics we find that Shropshire has contributed its full share. Mention has already been made of Reginald Heber, Bishop of Calcutta, and alongside of him we may place Thomas Percy, Bishop of Dromore, the lifelong friend of the Blakeways, and author of the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, who was born in 1729 at a house in Bridgnorth, which still remains a fine specimen of half-timbered work. Samuel Butler, the reviver of Shrewsbury School at the beginning of the last century, became Bishop of Lichfield in his later days, and at a more recent period Bishop William Walsham How maintained the honour of the county by his work in the East of London and afterwards at Wakefield.

But these only form the concluding links of a long chain, for the beginning of which we must go back to mediæval times. Perhaps the greatest ecclesiastic whom Shropshire has produced was Robert Burnell, the friend and Chancellor of Edward I., who was born at Acton Burnell in the early part of the thirteenth century. His family had hitherto occupied no distinguished position, but it was his lifelong endeavour to benefit both his belongings and the place of his birth. The great legislative acts of Edward's reign owed much to Burnell, and the friendship between them subsisted unbroken till the Chancellor's death in 1292. The King procured his appointment to the See of Bath and Wells in 1275, and he used his best endeavours to procure his elevation to Canterbury; but if we may trust the contemporary chroniclers, Burnell's personal character was not free from reproach, and the Pope refused the King's request. Allusion has already been made to the important Parliament which was held at Acton Burnell in 1283, and the castellated mansion which he erected for himself. It was his intention to raise his native village to the dignity of a market town, and though this intention did not prove successful, the church in particular remains a monument both of his interest in the place and his taste as an ecclesiastical builder. It is noteworthy also that half a century or so later Shropshire gave another bishop to Bath and Wells. Ralph of Shrewsbury, Chancellor of Oxford University, was consecrated to that see in 1329, and distinguished himself by reforming the abuses he found prevailing. Those acquainted with the Episcopal Palace at Wells will remember marks of the handiwork both of him and of Bishop Robert Burnell.

Passing over a couple of centuries, we come to another statesman bishop, who has been already mentioned in another connection—namely, Rowland Lee, who was not only Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, but, as President of the Court of the Marches from 1534 to 1543, did more than any of his predecessors in that office to suppress the disorders which prevailed on the Welsh border. He died at Shrewsbury in the College of St. Chad, of which his brother was dean at the time, and his remains were laid to rest in that church.

Bishops in the next century who enjoyed considerable reputation in their own day, though now hardly remembered outside the circle of their descendants, were: John

Bridgeman, chaplain to James I., appointed Bishop of Chester in 1619, a rigid opponent of the prevailing Puritanism; and his contemporary, John Hanmer, also chaplain to the King, who was Bishop of St. Asaph from 1624 till his death, and who rests in the churchyard at Selattyn; while to these might be added a considerable roll of men like Baxter and Fletcher, already mentioned, who, without attaining high ecclesiastical dignity, have achieved personal distinction, both in the ranks of the Church and of Nonconformity.



From an] BROMFIELD PRIORY. [*Old Engraving.*

When we turn from the arts of peace to that of war we have an array, not indeed large in number, but very distinguished—men whose names will live as long as there is any record of England's past. The record of Salopian valour and generalship might indeed commence with the great Earl Roger himself, who led the right wing of the Conqueror's army at Hastings, but we pass to another great Earl of Shrewsbury, belonging to a different and later creation, but equally worthy of the title. John Talbot, of Blackmere, in the parish of Whitchurch, was one of the most conspicuous figures of the first half of the fifteenth century. At the very beginning of that century he saw service against the Welsh, and in 1414 he was made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, a post which he also filled again at a later period. It was, however, in France that his main work as a military leader was done. It was the reign of Henry VI., the time when Joan of Arc was reviving the hopes of the French, and Talbot had the difficult work of sustaining the English power against her. He took part in all the battles of the period, and in that of Patay, in 1429, he was wounded and taken prisoner. In 1431, however, he was exchanged, and the following years witnessed a series of brilliant exploits on his part, including the capture of Harfleur and the recovery of a large French district. For this he was made Constable of France and Earl of Shrewsbury, or rather, strictly speaking, Earl of Salop, in 1442. After an interval spent in Ireland, he was again engaged in Normandy, and finally, at the age of eighty, he was despatched to the South of France to oppose the French in Aquitaine. The rest of the story cannot be better told than in the quaint words of Fuller:—

> This is that terrible Talbot so famous for his sword, or rather whose sword was so famous for his arm that used it: a sword with bad Latin upon it (Sum Talboti pro vincere inimicos meos) but good steel within it, which constantly conquered where it came, insomuch that the bare fame of his approach frighted the French from the siege of Bordeaux. Being victorious for twenty-four years together, success failed him at last, charging the enemy near Castilion on unequal terms, when he with his son the Lord Lisle were slain with a shot, July, 1453. Henceforward we may say "Good-night to the English in France," whose victories were buried with the body of this Earl, and his body interred at Whitechurch in this county.[1]

Students of Shakespeare will remember how prominently Talbot figures as one of the principal characters of *Henry VI.*, part 1, and how the dramatist preserves the tradition which is said still to exist in France, that he was so much feared "that with his name the mothers still their babes." In that play indeed Shakespeare contrives to comprehend the larger portion of his life and exploits up to the time when he and his son fell together at Chatillon. His connection with Shropshire did not end with his life. After the battle his heart was separately embalmed, and his remains were buried at Rouen, but were afterwards brought to his native Whitchurch, where his heart was interred within the porch, and his body within the chancel of the church. When wounded years before at the Battle of Patay, he had charged his bodyguard of Whitchurch men to bury him in the porch of their church, "that as they had stood over his body and defended it while living, they and their children should walk over it when dead." The spirit of this injunction was faithfully carried out, though not for a considerable interval after his death; but it was reserved for modern times to clear up several doubtful points. In 1874 it had become necessary to repair the tomb in the chancel, when two or three interesting discoveries were made. His bones were found reverently cared for in the original box in which they had been brought from Rouen, but an examination of the skull verified the statement of Holinshed that being first wounded by a shot he was despatched by a blow from a battle-axe while lying prostrate. The skull showed a wound exactly answering this description; but it brought to light another incident that is pathetic in view of his greatness while living. Within the hollow where his brain had throbbed a church mouse at some distant period had made her nest, and the mummified remains of herself and her offspring were found close by. One is irresistibly reminded of Hamlet's reflection over the skull of Yorick—"To what base uses may we return, Horatio."[1]

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[1] Fuller's *Worthies* (1811 edition), vol. ii., p. 260.

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[1] *Cf. Shropshire Archæological Society's Transactions*, vol. viii., 1st series, p. 413, "Talbot's Tomb."

But we must hasten on. Leaving untouched the leaders who distinguished themselves on both sides in the Civil War—men like Francis Lord Newport and Sir Francis Ottley, of the King's party, and General Mytton who belonged to the Parliamentarians—we come in the second half of the seventeenth century to the only seaman of distinction whom Shropshire appears to have produced. This was Vice-Admiral Benbow, born at Shrewsbury about 1653. Running away from home, he served for a while in the merchant service, and then in the navy. Employed first against the French in the Channel, he was afterwards sent in command of a Fleet to the West Indies. Here, in a running engagement with the French Admiral, he received a wound of which he died at Jamaica, November 2nd, 1702.

Something less than a quarter of a century after Benbow disappeared from the scene another military genius was born who must always rank among the greatest of Shropshire's sons. Robert Clive, born at the Styche, near Market Drayton, was an unmanageable boy for whom his friends were glad to obtain a writership under the East India Company which took him to that country. It was a critical time, when it hung in the balance whether India should pass into the hands of the English or their rivals the French. It was Clive who determined the question, first by his military genius and then by his administrative ability. It is not necessary to approve every act for which he was responsible in order to recognize his greatness. It was after his crowning victory at Plassey that he spent some time in England, during which he lived at Condover and became Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury. In the latter part of his career in India his resolute reform of abuses brought him into great unpopularity, and he was subjected to an enquiry before the House of Commons. Already shattered in health, both of mind and body, his physical ailments and the opium which he took to allay them proved too much for his mental balance, and he died by his own hand in 1774.

One other Salopian General must be mentioned, namely, Rowland, first Lord Hill of Hawkstone, who was born two years before Clive's death. He was the Duke of Wellington's great friend and helper, serving under him in the Peninsular War between 1808 and 1814, and at the Battle of Waterloo, leading the brigade which made the victory complete by sweeping the Old Guard of Napoleon off the field. His exploits were commemorated at the time by what is still a familiar object to his fellow Salopians—the column at the top of the Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, commenced in 1814 and completed on June 18th, 1816, the first anniversary of Waterloo. Sir Herbert Edwardes, the hero of Moultan, who died in 1868, belongs to modern days.

Enough has been said to show that the roll of illustrious Salopians of whom all Europe has taken note is no slight one, but it is when we turn to the civil life of our own country that we encounter the largest array of all. Hulbert, in his *Manual of Shropshire Biography*, quotes a MS. of the date 1734, from which it appears that between the years 1512 and 1632 no less than twenty-four Salopians filled the office of Lord Mayor of London; and whether this could be substantiated in every case or not, it was certainly true in most, for they bear unmistakably Shropshire names. The first was Sir Roger Acherley, born at Stanwardine, who attained the dignity in the year just mentioned; but probably the best known of these early Lord Mayors was Sir Rowland Hill, of Hodnet, who was the first holder of the office who professed the Reformed faith and filled the post in 1550. He was a benefactor to the Churches of Hodnet and Stoke-on-Tern, and his memory is kept alive in the county by the obelisk surmounted by his statue, which stands in Hawkstone Park.

A later Salopian Lord Mayor who filled the office after the date of Hulbert's MS. has been already spoken of in the person of John Boydell, the engraver, and the list might, it is believed, be added to in still later times.

The genius, however, of Salopians in the direction of administrative capacity has shown itself beyond all others in the region of the Law. In the Introduction to the *Visitation of Shropshire* taken in 1623, recently published by the Harleian Society, is a list of no less than twenty-five Salopians who attained the highest legal positions, all with one exception within the period covered by the Visitation, and including three in each of the respective families of Bromley, Townshend and Onslow. This is a record which few other counties can pretend to rival, and it must be remembered that the list is very far from complete. It does not, for example, include men like Bishop Rowland Lee, already spoken of, and Sir William Leighton (buried at Cardington), whose administrative work was done in connection with the Court of the Welsh Marches; nor does it include men who had not attained eminence till after the date of the Visitation, such as Sir Job Charlton, Sir Thomas Jones, Sir Thomas Powys and his brother Sir Littleton, Sir Edward Lutwyche, and others, all of whom became Judges; and to mention only one of later date, Lloyd Kenyon, first Baron of that name, who filled the office of Chief Justice from 1788 to 1802.

Of those included in the Visitation three may be specially mentioned on the ground that we owe to them, directly or indirectly, the building of three of the historical houses of the county. First, Sir Robert Brooke, of Claverley, who was Chief Justice of the Common Pleas from 1554 till his death in 1558, and who had previously filled the office of Speaker, purchased an estate at Madeley and erected on it the present Madeley Court. The house is now shorn of its glory, and its surroundings are grimy rather than sylvan, but it is full of interest for the antiquary, both for its architectural details and its historical connection with the wanderings of Charles II. after the Battle of Worcester. Another Judge of the Common Pleas, some forty years later, was Thomas Owen, who was nearly related to the

CONDOVER HALL.

builder of Owen's Mansion in Shrewsbury. He represented the town in Parliament in 1584, and was also a member of the Court of the Marches. About 1588 he determined to build himself a house in his native county, and having purchased a small property at Condover from the Viner family, to which he added as opportunity offered, he proceeded to erect the present Condover Hall. About this time we have the record of a certain Freemason, Walter Hancock, being strongly recommended to the Bailiffs of Shrewsbury by Sir Francis Newport when they were about to build the Market Hall in the Square; and there is no doubt that the design for Judge Owen's house came from Walter Hancock. It appears to have been finished in 1594, but it is doubtful whether the Judge himself ever lived there. He died in 1598, leaving the estate to his eldest son Sir Roger Owen, who was himself learned in the law, and, as became a friend of Camden, was also a keen antiquary. Condover Church contains a monument to the memory of both father and son, as well as a daughter and her husband, and there is in Westminster Abbey a fine recumbent figure of the judge. The house has been fortunate in the treatment it has received in later generations, and still stands in its pristine beauty as one of the most perfect Elizabethan stone edifices in England.

The mention of Sir Francis Newport introduces us to another family, of which no less than three members attained high legal dignity, and to another historical house now, alas! almost entirely passed away. Sir Thomas Bromley, to whom there is a fine monument in Wroxeter Church, was Chief Justice from 1553 to 1555. Sir Edward was Baron of the Exchequer from 1609 to 1626, while a second Sir Thomas had been Lord Chancellor from 1579 to 1587. On the Dissolution of the Monasteries Sir Thomas Bromley the first purchased a portion of the estate belonging to the Abbey of Shrewsbury, including the house at Eyton-on-Severn, in the Parish of Wroxeter, which was the pleasant summer residence of the Abbot. This property passed through his only daughter to her son Francis Newport, already mentioned as the patron of Walter Hancock. Sir Francis was a great builder, and having apparently employed Hancock in building his house at High Ercall—itself one of the historical mansions of the county which figured largely in the Civil War—he proceeded to add to the abbot's house at Eyton, making it a more stately residence for himself. Whatever his work, however, it has now passed away with the exception of two turreted summer houses which flanked the terrace walk, and clearly date from the beginning of the seventeenth century. Eyton, however, has another association which should be mentioned. The eccentric Lord Herbert of Chirbury was born there, as he tells us in his Autobiography, and he spent part of his childhood there in company with his younger brother George, whose memory is still kept green in all devout minds by his sacred poems and his little treatise on the duties of a parish priest—duties which he himself exemplified as Vicar of Bemerton, near Salisbury.

It is time, however, to draw this chapter to a close. It might easily be extended to a volume from the quantity of material at hand to draw upon, and it has been difficult to compress without unduly sacrificing interest to brevity, but enough has been said to show that the roll of illustrious Salopians, especially in practical life, is such as few counties can rival, and enough to convince the Salopian of the twentieth century that so far from belonging to a county of which he must be ashamed, he has only to look back on the centuries past to be stimulated to achieve distinction himself, in the consciousness that like the great Apostle of Tarsus he is "a citizen of no mean city."

THOMAS AUDEN.

INDEX

Abbey, C. J., *Religious Thought in Old English Verse* quoted, 77
——and Overton's *English Church in the Eighteenth Century* cited, 117
Abbeys, Five great Shropshire, dissolved, 249
——significance of, in early times, 201
Abbot of Lilleshall's house in Shrewsbury, 79
——Shrewsbury: country house at Eyton-on-Severn, 273-4
Abbots, Shropshire, summoned to House of Peers, 90, 201
Act of Uniformity, 105, 107, 110
Acton, Sir Edward, captured at siege of Bridgnorth, 193
——Sir Roger, a prominent Lollard, 95
Acton Burnell, 18, 28, 61, 240
——Church, thirteenth century building, 240
——Scott, sixteenth century house, 247-8
Actors of Shropshire, Famous, 264-5
Adams, Sir Thomas, founder of Wem Grammar School, 229
——William, benefactor of Newport Grammar School, 230-1
Addenbrooke, John, headmaster of Market Drayton Grammar School, 227
Adderley, 57
Adeliza de Puiset, second wife of Roger de Montgomery, 24, 70
Admiral Benbow, 270
Agricola of Tacitus quoted, 210
Alberbury, 62
Alberbury, old parish school at, 233
——Church, timber roof, 245
——Priory, 82
Albright Hussey Manor House, defence of, 175-6.
Albrighton, its history and antiquities, 45, 46
——Church, chancel fourteenth century, 244
Alcock, John, Bishop of Ely, 144
Alcocke, Thomas, founder of Donington Grammar School, 229, 230
Aldenham, rebuilt in seventeenth century, 253
Alderton Estate, changed hands after the Civil War, 194, 248
Alfred the Great: his law as to the education of children, 211
Alveley, endowed elementary school at, 232
Anarchy, Shropshire during the, 16
——The, not without good results, 16
Anchorites in Shropshire, 68
Ancient towns found mostly on the borders of the county, 63
Andrews, Eusebius, Secretary to Council of War, 169
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle cited, 1, 8, 10, 11
Anne Boleyn, 100
Apley Castle captured by the Parliament, 178
——retaliation by the Royalists, 178
——Park utilized as block house in Civil War, 169, 256

Appleton, John, Methodist currier, 116, 117
Aqualate Mere, The mermaid of, 130
Architectural Story of Shropshire, 236-256
Aron, John, founder of Market Drayton Grammar School, 228
Armourer, Captain, Royalist officer, 189
Arrests in Church, 185
Arroasian Canons, 78
Arrow, The Golden, of Pontesford, 133
Arthur, Prince, son of Henry VII., holds Court at Ludlow, 21, 144, 145
Arundel, Archbishop, 96, 98
Arundels, The, of Clun, 162, 202
Ashford Carbonell, old parish school at, 223
Ashton, Thomas, headmaster of Shrewsbury School, 221, 224
Asteley, Lord, Royalist leader, 192
Aston, country laid waste by Wulfhere as far as, 9
——Aer, a twelfth century church, 242
——Botterel, 62
Atcham, birthplace of Ordericus Vitalis, 67
——Bridge Garrison, capture of, 187
——Church utilized as a block house during the Civil War, 169
——dedicated to Eata, early British missionary, 67
Atcherley, James, headmaster of Shrewsbury School, 224
——Sir Roger, Lord Mayor of London, 271
Attingham, see Atcham
——Hall, classic eighteenth century house, 254
Audelay, John, Canon of Haughmond and poet, 76, 77, 260
Austin Canons, 75-81
Auden's *Shrewsbury* cited, 260
——Friars in Shropshire, 90, 243

Bacon, Lord, on the Council of the Marches, 153
Bagbury, the roaring bull of, 63
Bailiffs, town, dispute with headmaster of Shrewsbury School, 222, 223
Baldwin, Archbishop, and the Crusades, 83
Baldwyn-Childe, Mrs., cited, 49
Bangor Iscoed, many monks of, slain at Chester, 8
——, Celtic Monastery or College at, 65, 68
Barnet, Joshua, of Wrockwardine, 108
Baronage of Shropshire, The feudal, 197, 198
Barrow Church contains Saxon work, 237
——, endowed elementary school at, 232
Basil Wood, of White Abbey (1715), his map cited, 205
——list of county families, 205, 206
Battles in Shropshire:—
  Hopton Heath, 168
  Ludford Bridge, 144
  Norton, near Stokesay, 190
  Shrewsbury, 19
  Whittington, 182
Battlefield Church, built to commemorate the battle of Shrewsbury, 19, 62, 245, 246
Baxter, Richard, the Puritan divine, 108-111, 171, 231, 267
——proposes to found a University at Shrewsbury, 233, 234
——*Memoirs*, quoted, 160, 230
Beaufort, Duke of, 156, 157
Beaufort Progress quoted, 157
Beauties of England cited, 60
Belesme, Robert de, 15, 27, 50, 51, 53, 82
Belmeis, Philip de, 78
——Richard de, 78
Belswardine, old country house, 208, 247
Benbow, Admiral, 270
——Lieutenant, 187
Benedictines in Shropshire, 69-71
Bennett, W., benefactor of Shifnal Grammar School, 228
——Hall, Shrewsbury, 243
Benthall, sixteenth century house, 247
——used as a block house in Civil War, 169

Benthall Church, seventeenth century, 253
——Stone, near Alberbury, 63
Berrington, half-timbered Hall, 254
——Church, 244
Berth Pool, Legend concerning, 129
Berwick, eighteenth century house, 254
Bettws-y-Crwyn Church, fifteenth century screen, 245
Betty, the tragedian, *Young Roscius*, 265
Billingsley, Col. Francis, Royalist leader, 192
Binweston, moated house, 242
Birch, Col., Royalist leader, 193
——fails to capture Ludlow, 189
Bishops, how summoned to the House of Lords, 201
——Castle, history and antiquities of, 57-59
—— ——had two representatives in Parliament, 201
——Presidents of the Council of the Marches :—
  Alcock, John, Bishop of Ely, 144
  Lee, Rowland, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, 146
  Smith, founder of Brasenose College, 145
  Voysey, John, Bishop of Exeter, 145
Bitterley, old parish school at, 233
Black and White style used in some ecclesiastical buildings, 208
Black Birches, The, a good example of half-timbered house, 208
——Death, The, 94
——Friars, The, in Shropshire, 89-90
——Pool, near Longnor, Legend concerning the, 129
Blackmere, birthplace of John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, 202, 268
Blakeway, J. B., *History of Albrighton* cited, 46
——his MSS. quoted, 158
Blanchminster, see *Oswestry*
Blount, Sir George's, ghost, 123
Boat-building at Bridgnorth, 35
Bolingbroke once student at Sheriffhales Academy, 234
Bomere Pool, Legends concerning, 129, 131
Boscobel House, 248
——Charles II. and the oak of, 21
Bostock, Captain, Royalist officer, 179
Bowen, Emanuel, his map of the county in 1751, 204
——James, painter, real author of Phillips' *History of Shrewsbury*, 257
——John, painter, 257
Bowers, Bishop of Chichester, pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Boydell, John, engraver, romantic career of, 258, 259, 271
Braggington Hall, early seventeenth century, 250, 251
Braine, Major, Parliamentary leader, 191
Bray, Thomas, once pupil in Oswestry Grammar School, and founder of the S.P.C.K. and S.P.G., 218
Breidden Hills, last stand of Caractacus on, 4, 5
Brereton, Sir William, Parliamentary General, 168, 170-2, 192
Breteuil, the law of, 52, 61
Brampton Brian, 189
Bridgeman, John, Bishop of Chester, 266, 267
——Sir John, Recorder of Ludlow, 160
Bridgewater, Earl of, 155, 156, 157, 162
Bridgnorth, Danes encamp near, 11
——, Ethelfleda builds fortress at, 12
——besieged by Henry I., 15
—— ——Henry II., 17
—— ——Oliver Cromwell, 191
——Grey Friars at, 89
——elections "all on one side," 160
——captured by Earl of Essex, 165, 166
——defence of in the Civil War, 169, 192, 193
——final capture by the Parliament, 192, 193
——visited by Charles I. and his army, 167, 192

Bridgnorth, history, trade, and constitution of, 31-35, 54
——Church (St. Leonard's) tower rebuilt in fifteenth century, 246
——Grammar School, short history of, 215-217
——had two representatives in Parliament, 201
——Town Hall rebuilt during the Commonwealth, 251
Brochmail, British leader, defeated by Ethelfrith at Chester, 8
Brogyntyn, a classic house of the eighteenth century, 254
Bromfield Priory, 70
——Church, seventeenth century painted plaster ceiling, 255
Bromley, Henry, of Shrawardine, Sheriff, 166, 169
——Edward, Baron of the Exchequer, 273
—— ——pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
——Sir Thomas, Chief Justice, 273, 274
—— ——Lord Chancellor, 278
Broncroft, 189, 190, 197
Brooke, Lord, Parliamentary General, 168
——pupil of Shrewsbury School, 224, 229
——Death of, 168
——Sir Robert, of Claverley, Speaker and Chief Justice, 272
Broseley, 59, 60
Brown, Thomas, the poet, a pupil of Newport Grammar School, 232, 261, 262
Bryan, John, of Shrewsbury, 108
Brythons, marks of the racial type of the, 3
Buildings, representative in Shropshire, 236-256
Buildwas Abbey, 74, 238
——utilised as a block house in the Civil War, 169
Buntingsdale, an eighteenth century house, 254
Burford, 61, 62
"Burhs" established in every direction, 9
Burke's *Landed Gentry* referred to, 205
Burnaby, Colonel, pupil of Oswestry Grammar School, 219
Burne's *Shropshire Folk-Lore* cited, 7, 67
Burnell, Bishop Robert, entertained Edward I. at Acton Burnell in 1283, 18, 61, 240, 265, 266
Burney, Dr. Charles, author of *History of Music*, 259
Burton, Edward, of Longnor, Protestant zeal of, 102, 103
Butcher Row, Shrewsbury, corner house in, dates from fifteenth century, 244
Butler, Dr. Samuel, headmaster of Shrewsbury School, 224, 265
Butter Cross, near Alveley, 63
Buttington, Danes pursued as far as, and there defeated, 11
Byron, Sir Nicholas, Royalist Commander, 168, 175

Caer Digoll, British earthworks on Long Mountain, 8
Caerleon in Monmouthshire, 65
Calamy's *Nonconformists' Memorial* cited, 105
Calvin, Lord, Parliamentary leader, 183
Camden cited, 31, 35, 37, 43, 49, 51, 53, 56, 57, 58, 60, 222
Capel, Lord, Commander of Royalist forces, 168-174
Caractacus, defeat and capture of, 4, 5
——Hole on Caradoc called after him, 135
Caradoc, see *Caractacus*
——Wakes, 131, 135
Carbery, Earl of, 156, 157
Careswell Charity, the, 228
Carmelite Friars at Ludlow, 90
Cary, Sir Edmund, Royalist officer, 189
Castellated mansions in Shropshire, Eyton's list of, 195
Castle, significance of the, in early times, 201
Castles in Shropshire referred to—
    Apley, 110, 169, 178, 243
    Bishop's Castle, 57
    Bridgnorth, 31, 192, 193
    Broncroft, 189, 190, 197

Castles in Shropshire referred to—
  Caus, 169, 190, 193, 238
  Cleobury Mortimer, 48, 49
  Clun, 38, 39
  Dawley, 60, 191
  Ellesmere, 16, 52
  Hodnet, 196
  Holgate, 62, 189, 237, 238
  Hopton, 176, 177
  Ludlow, 143-150, 154-158, 170, 189, 193, 243
  Moreton Corbet, 51, 175, 183, 184, 189
  Oswestry, 36, 37, 182
  Rouse, 189
  Rowton, 193
  Ruyton, 40
  Shrawardine, 63, 190, 193
  Shrewsbury, 13, 26
  Stokesay, 126, 190
  Stretton, 41
  Tong, 169, 180, 189, 243, 254
  Wem, 51
  Whitchurch, 42
  Whittington, 16
——destroyed in the Civil War, 193
——Eyton's list of early, in Shropshire, 196
——Edward I. builds border castles as protection against the Welsh, 19
——general disappearance of, as residences, 207, 239
——Henry II. reduces the number of feudal, 17
——in early times very numerous in Shropshire, 195, 196, 238
——their changed condition to-day, 197
Caus, 61
——Castle, 169, 190, 193, 238
Ceawlin captures Uriconium and many other towns, 7
——and Cutha, victory over Britons at Deorham in 577, 7
—— ——victory at Feathanleag and death of Cutha, 7
Celtic city on the site of Uriconium, 4
——and Saxon periods, history of, 1-12
——racial type, 3
Chaloner, Thomas, headmaster of Shrewsbury School, 223, 225
Chaloner, Thomas, entertains some of Charles I.'s court, 164
—— ——becomes headmaster of Market Drayton Grammar School, 227
—— ——becomes headmaster of Newport Grammar School, 231
Changes in old Shropshire families, 195-209
Charles I., 56, 153, 162-4, 166-8, 190-2, 250
——II., 21, 46, 248
Charlton, Margaret, wife of Richard Baxter, 110
——Robert, of Apley, a prominent Parliamentarian, 163, 174, 190
——Sir Job, eminent judge, 272
Charlton's Mansion, in Shrewsbury, 243
Charter of King John to Shrewsbury, 15
Chaucer quoted, 92-94
Chelmarsh Church, Decorated architecture, 243
Cheney Longville, a moated house, 242
Chester, Shropshire manors owned by the Bishop of, 14
Cheswardine, 62
Chetwynd, 62, 190, 250
——Pigotts, The, 124
Chicheley, Archbishop, 82
Chirbury, 61
——Church contains early thirteenth century work, 238
——first included in Shropshire in 1537, 202
——Ethelfleda erects a fortress at, 12, 236
——Priory, 80
——village school built and endowed in 1675, 233
Christianity, sources of Shropshire, 65-67
Churches destroyed in the Civil War, 193
——used for military purposes in the Civil War, 172 *n.*
Churchbuilding at low ebb, early nineteenth century, 256
Churchyard, Thomas, the poet, quoted, 143, 149, 160, 210
Church Stretton, its history and antiquities, 41, 42

Church Stretton, old Market House disappeared, 247
——church tower built fifteenth century, 246, 252
Cistercian Monastic Order, the 73-75
Civilization, difference of early, between northern and southern part of the county, 2
Civil War, the, in Shropshire, 21, 22, 29, 162-194
——not a class struggle, but one of religion and government, 207
Clanvowe, John, the Lollard, 96
Clarendon's *History* cited, 166, 188
Classical Presbyteries, 106, 107
Claverley, endowed elementary school at, 232
——Church, chancel fourteenth century, 244
—— ——tower built in fifteenth century, 246
Clay industry in Salop, the, 59
Clee Hills, legends concerning, 126
Cleobury Mortimer, 30
—— ——castle besieged by Henry II., 17
—— ——church contains early thirteenth century work, 238
—— ——history and antiquities of, 48-50
—— ——probably birthplace of William Langland, the poet, 91
Clifford, Lewis, the Lollard, 96
—Rosamund (Fair Rosamond), 97
Clive, Robert, Lord, 174, 187, 188, 220, 270
—— ——a pupil of Market Drayton Grammar School, 227, 228
Clive's *History of Ludlow* cited, 153
Clun, its history and antiquities, 37-39
——first incorporated in Shropshire in 1537, 202
——Forest, inhabitants largely Welsh, 10
—— ——Red deer and roe wild in, 195, 202
Clun; Francis, Earl of Arundel, of, 162
Clungunford Church, chancel, fourteenth century, 244
Cluniac Monastic Order, 71-73
Coalbrookdale, 59
Coal industry in Shropshire, the, 54, 59, 60
Coalport, 59
Cobham, Lord, 96-98
Cockayne cited, 121
Cockfight money formerly payable at our Grammar Schools, 218
Cole Hall, Shrewsbury, 243
Colemere, legend concerning, 129
——Royalist troops encamped at, 172
Collegiate churches, four, founded in Shrewsbury in Saxon days, 211
Combermere, the monks and abbot of, 42, 57
Commission of Array appointed for the county, 162
——for the regulation, continuance, and erection of schools during the Commonwealth, 212, 219
Committee of Sequestration's Report at the end of Civil War, 174
——of twenty appointed by the Parliament, 170, 178
—— ——List of successes of the, 191, 192
Commons first legally summoned to Parliament at Shrewsbury, 18
Commonwealth, little building done during the, 251
Comus cited, 143, 155
——representation of, at Ludlow, 155
Condover, 54, 131, 174
——Church, fall of, in 1660, 246
—— ——rebuilding of, 252, 253
——Hall, one of the Elizabethan houses of the county, 207, 247, 273
——" The Small House " at, good specimen of fifteenth century house, 244
Constable of Ludlow Castle, the, 156
Contributions, handsome, to the Royalist cause, 166

Copper Mining under the Romans at Llanymynech, 5
Corbet, Sir Andrew, 153
——Captain Pelham, of Caus Castle, 185
——Colonel Thomas, Royalist officer, 189
——Jerome, 150
——John, of Adderley, Parliamentary leader, 168, 170, 227
——Richard, built Longnor Hall in 1658, 253
——Vincent, appointed Commander of regiment of Shropshire Dragoons, 167-169, 189, 193, 194, 251
Cornavii, British tribe of, 3-5
——their chief city at Uriconium, 4
Corn Mill, ancient, at Longnor, 241
Cornewall, Sir Thomas, 160
Corporation of Shrewsbury, beginning of the, 26, 28
—— ——apply for the Abbey to be made over to the town, 102
Corporations, Municipal, origin and significance of, 201
Corpus Christi Gild Procession, 136
Coton, near Hodnet, old house of fifteenth century, 244
Council in the Marches of Wales, by Miss Skeel, cited, 161
Council of Arles in 314, 65
——of the Marches, History of, 20, 21, 23, 31, 143-161
—— ——special work of, 144, 146-149, 152, 156, 159, 160, 161
—— ——abuses of, 150-152, 159, 161
——of War held in Shrewsbury, 162, 250
Cound, appointment of "Minister" of, 106-108
——Hall, a seventeenth century house, 253
County, General History of the, 1-24
——Families, and Basil Wood's list of the, 205, 206
——Houses, and Basil Wood's list of the, 205
Court of Hill, seventeenth century house, 253
Court of the Marches, see *Council of the Marches*
Coventry and Lichfield, Bishop of, 146-148, 157
Cranage, a young soldier who fired a bomb at Oswestry, 181, 182
Craven Arms, 59
——Lord, of Stokesay, 162, 250
Creighton, Bishop, quoted, 23, 24
Crenellating of Stokesay and other castles by royal license, 30, 239-242
Cressage, 63, 66
——Christianity found very early at, 210
Cressett, Edward, of Upton Cressett, Royalist leader, 169
——presentation of James, 106-108
Crewe, Lord Chief Justice, an old pupil of Shrewsbury School, 224
Croeswylan, 62
Cromwell, Oliver, visits to Shropshire, 191
——Thomas, 146, 147
Cross built into Wroxeter Church, one of the oldest Christian monuments remaining in Shropshire, 236
Crowe, Capt., Commandant of Shrewsbury Castle, hanged for treachery or cowardice, 188
Crusades, The, in Shropshire, 82-86
Cuckoo's Cup on Wrekin, 134
Cudworth, headmaster of Market Drayton Grammar School, 226, 227
Cupboards, secret, built in old country houses, 248
Cureton, William, the Orientalist, a pupil of Newport Grammar School, 231
Curthose, Robert, 15, 82
Customs curiously divided in Shropshire, 63, 141
——old, of the county, 120-142

Danes defeated at Buttington, 11
Danesford, a Danish encampment on the Severn, 11
Danish invasion, 10-12
—— ——left no impress on the county, 12

Darwin, Charles, pupil of Shrewsbury School, 226
Davenport, eighteenth century house, 254
David ap Gruffydd, 18
—— ——sent in chains to Shrewsbury and there executed, 18, 28
——ap Owen, 51
Dawley, 59, 60, 191
De Pitchfords, the, 45
Dee, Bishop, of Peterborough, a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Deer, Red, in Shropshire, 195
——Forests at Clun and Hockstow, 195
——Parks in Shropshire, 204
Demetus on the merits of the Court of Marches, 152
"Demosthenes" Taylor, pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Denbigh, Earl of, appointed Parliamentary Commander, 170, 181
Derby, Charles I. passes through, 164
——Earls of, 52
Despoiling of churches at the Reformation in Salop, 249
Devil's Chair, the, on Stiperstones, 126
Dialect curiously divided in the county, 141
Diddlebury Church, Saxon work, 237
Dingley (or Dinely), Thomas, writer of *Beaufort Progress*, 157
Dioceses of Lichfield, St. Asaph, and Hereford, ancient boundaries of, 141
Directory of Shropshire, Kelly's, cited, 206
Domesday Book cited, 14, 26, 238
Domesday Book of 1873 cited, 203
Dominican Friars in Shropshire, 88-94
Donington Grammar School, short history of, 229, 230
——Wood, 78
Donne, Dr., headmaster of Oswestry Grammar School, 218
Douglas, John, Bishop of Salisbury, a pupil of Donington, 230
Dovaston, J. F. M., poet, 263, 264
Dovey, Richard, endowed the national school at Claverley, 232
Downes, Andrew, Greek Professor, pupil of Shrewsbury School, 224
Dragoons, regiment of, raised during Civil War in the county, 167
Drakes (? mitrailleuses) used in the siege of Shrewsbury, 171
Draper, Thomas, founder of Newport Grammar School, 230
Drayton's *Polyolbion* quoted, 142
Duchess of Shrewsbury, 46
Dugdale's *Monasticon* cited, 196
Duke of Beaufort, 156, 157
Dunstanvills, the De, 44
Dunvall, half-timbered sixteenth century house at, 247
Dutch style of eighteenth century, the formal, 253
Dyer's *Fleece* quoted, 131

Eata, the early British missionary, 67
Ecclesiastics, distinguished, of Shropshire, 265-267
Eccleston, Henry, steward of Earl of Bridgwater, at Ludlow, 155
Edgmond church tower built, fifteenth century, 246
——ghost laid at, 124
Edric Sylvaticus (The Wild), 13, 37, 128, 131
Education, King Alfred's law as to, 211
——elementary, cared for in endowed village schools, 232, 233
——of children left entirely to the Church in early times, 211
Edward I., 18, 28, 47, 52, 55, 62, 76, 85
——II., 47, 57, 62
——III., 52, 82
——IV., 20, 56, 144
——V., 20, 144, 145
——VI., 100, 102, 143, 213, 215, 249
——the Confessor, 12, 13, 50, 57
Edwards, Sir Clement, pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Eighteenth Century, an era of church building, 254

Elizabeth, Queen, 58, 101, 150, 221
Elizabethan farmhouses scattered over the county, 248
Ellesmere, its history and antiquities, 51-53
——first incorporated in Shropshire in 1537, 202
——Castle, held during the Anarchy for Matilda, 16
——Church, fifteenth century work in, 246
——Lake, Legend concerning, 129
——Night attack on Royalist convoy at, 174, 175
——Royalist troops assembled at during Civil War, 172
Ellis, Colonel, captures Apley Castle, 178-180
Elsich, sixteenth century house, 247
Endowed Village Schools for elementary education in the county, 232, 233
England Displayed cited, 50
England Illustrated cited, 35, 37, 39, 41, 44, 48, 49, 51, 54, 56, 57, 58
Engravers of Shropshire, 258, 259
Ensdon House utilized in the Civil War as a block house, 169
Episcopacy, abolition of, 105
Ercall Hill, legend how it was first formed, 125
Essex, Earl of, appointed Captain-General of the Forces by the Parliament, 16, 41
Estates changed hands owing to the Civil War, 194
——value of, compounded for after the Civil War, 194
Ethelfleda, King Alfred's daughter, Lady of the Mercians, 12
Ethelfrith of Northumbria slays in battle many Welsh monks from Bangor Iscoed, 8
Ethelred visits Shropshire, 1
Ethered pursues the Danes to Buttington and there defeats them, 11, 12
Eure, Dame Mary, monument to, in Ludlow Church, 158
Evans, David, second master of Shrewsbury School, entertains some of the Court, 164, 223
Evans, John, headmaster of Oswestry Grammar School, 219
Eyton-on-Severn, country residence of the Abbot of Shrewsbury, 273, 274
——birthplace of Lord Herbert of Chirbury, 274
Eyton-on-the-wild-moors, church rebuilt in eighteenth century, 255
Eyton's *Antiquities of Shropshire* quoted, 68, 80, 81, 84, 200
——list of castles and castellated mansions, 196

Fairfax, Sir William, Parliamentary leader, 176
Fairs granted, 33, 34, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49-53, 55, 57-63
Falstaff at the battle of Shrewsbury, 19; Oldcastle compared to, 97
Families, list of county, in Shropshire, 205, 206
——changes in old Shropshire, 195-209
Family, frequent changes in succession in the English Royal, 200
Farmer, James, of Cound, Quaker, 113, 114
Feasts and merrymakings, fondness of Salopians for, 141, 142
Felton Heath, pursuit of Royalist forces to, 182
Fenwicke, Colonel, appointed Governor of Moreton Corbet Castle, 184
Fethanleag, battle of, 7
Feudal Baronage of Shropshire, 147, 148
Feudalism, origin and significance of, 200, 201
——final overthrow of, 19
Fifteenth century work in churches, 243, 244
—— ——in wood, 245
Fisher, Rev. Samuel, 163
Fisher's *Annals of Shrewsbury School* quoted, 188, 224
Fitz Aer family, home of, now incorporated in farm buildings, 242
Fitzalan, William, Lord of Oswestry and Clun, 36, 38, 76

Fitzalans, strange fatality among the, 200
Fitz church, a brick eighteenth century edifice, 254
Fitz Manor, 254
FitzOsbern, William, 13, 48
FitzScrob, Richard, 12
Fletcher, Rev. John, Vicar of Madeley, 115, 117-119, 255, 267
Florence of Worcester cited, 31
Folklore of the county, legends and old customs, 120-142
——often general rather than local, 121, 122, 125
Folkmoots, establishment of, in every direction, 9
Ford church, fifteenth century timbered roof, 245
—— ——fifteenth century screen, 245
——House, eighteenth century house, 254
Fourteenth century work in churches, 243, 244; imitated in seventeenth century, 251
Fowler, Richard, of Harnage, captured at Hinton, 186
Fox's *Acts and Monuments* cited, 96, 101
Fox, George, founder of Quakerism, 112, 113
——Mr. Secretary, 160.
Foy, Mr., curate of Edgmond, lays a ghost, 124
Franchise of Cleobury, the, 49
Franciscan Friars in Shropshire, 88-94
Frankwell, 64
——fort at, 186, 188
Free Grammar Schools, right meaning of the word "free," 213
——Library at Shrewsbury, formerly the old Grammar School, 251
——School at Ludlow, 154
Friars, the coming of the, and their work in Shropshire, 88-94
——Eremites, 90
Friends, The Society of, in Shropshire, 111-114
Fuller's *Worthies* quoted, 101, 268
Fusion of Norman and Saxon elements, 15

Gaelic racial type, 3
Gauntlett, Henry John, composer and organist, 259
Gay Meadow, the, at Shrewsbury, Royal troops mustered in, 166
Gerard, William, description of his colleagues, 150
Ghosts, how they were laid, 122, 123
Giants' Chairs, 126, 135
——legends concerning, 125-127, 135
Gilbert, Thomas, rector of Edgmond, benefactor of Newport Grammar School, 231
Gild, Palmers', the, founds a Grammar School at Ludlow, 214, 215
——Merchant, 28, 33, 47
Gildas quoted, 210
Gilds, the origin and significance of, 201
Geraldus Cambrensis cited, 27, 74, 83
Glynne, Mrs., a friend of Wesley, 116
Goldegay, Sir William, Parliamentary officer, 180
Golden Arrow, the, of Pontesford, 133
Galford's Tower, Ludlow, 160
Gomme's *Ethnology and Folklore* cited, 132
Gough's *History of Myddle* quoted, 169, 175, 188, 193, 230, 233, 251
Grammar Schools of Shropshire, existing and extinct—
    Battlefield, 212
    Bridgnorth, 212, 213, 214, 215-217
    Donington, 214, 229, 230
    Halesowen, 214, 232
    High Ercall, 214, 232
    Ludlow, 212, 214, 215
    Madeley, 212
    Market Drayton, 214, 226-228
    Newport, 214, 230-232
    Oswestry, 212, 214, 217-219
    Shifnal, 214, 223
    Shrewsbury, 213, 214, 223-226
    Tong, 212-214
    Wellington, 213, 214, 219, 220
    Wem, 214, 229
    Whitchurch, 214, 220
    Whittington, 214, 232
    Worfield, 214, 228, 229

Grammar School, Shrewsbury, the old, now the Free Library, 251
——Schools, largely founded by men who had left the county, 213
—— ——English, probably over 300 in number at the time of the Reformation, 212
—— ——receive royal grants, 213
Grand Jury and Clergy sign Declaration to King Charles I., 163
Grandmont, Order of, 81, 196
Graves, Richard, founds an Exhibition at Ludlow Grammar School, 215
Gray quoted, 100
Great Bolas, Church of eighteenth century, 255
Great Ness, has seventeenth century altar rails, 252
Greet Court, early seventeenth century, 250
Greville, Fulk, 148
Grey Friars in Shropshire, 89, 90
Griffith ap Rees publicly whipped at Ludlow, 160
——Sir Piers, pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Grove, John, endows village school at Alveley, 232
Growth of the Towns, 16
Guisers or Mummers, 139, 140

Habberley Hall, early seventeenth century, 250
Haberdashers Company of London appoint Governors of Newport Grammar School, 231
Halesowen Abbey, 81
——Grammar School, 232
Hallowe'en celebrations, 140, 141
Halston Chapel, an example of black and white ecclesiastical architecture, 208, 250
——, establishment of Templars at, 86, 87
——, house of Knights of St. John at, 196
——, once the house of Jack Mytton, 250
Hancock, Walter, architect, designs Condover Hall, 273, 274
Hanmer, John, Bishop of St. Asaph, 267
Hardwick, an eighteenth century house, 254
Harley, Lady Brilliana, gallant defence of Brampton Brian Castle, 180
Hartland's *Science of Fairy Tales* quoted, 137, 138
Hartshorn, C. H., the antiquary, a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 226
Hastings (or Senlac), battle of, 12
Hatton Grange, near Shifnal, eighteenth century house, 254
Haughmond Abbey, 62, 68, 76-78, 191, 192, 196, 232, 238, 248, 249, 274
Hayward, Sir Rowland, pupil of Bridgnorth Grammar School, 216
Healing Wells, 131
Heathenism and Christianity, conflict of, at Maserfield, 8
Heber, Bishop, once rector of Hodnet, 263
Henley, near Ludlow, eighteenth century house, 254
Henry I., 15, 16, 27, 47, 51, 78, 238
——II., 17, 27, 47, 49, 51, 97
——III., 17, 18, 47, 50, 52, 55, 59, 61, 62, 74
——IV., 19, 28, 29, 85
——V., 97
——VII., 20, 100, 144, 244
——VIII., 56, 100
——Earl of Richmond, visits Shrewsbury on his way to Bosworth Field, 20
—— ——the house he stayed at remains, a good example of fifteenth century work, 244
——Philip, *Diary* quoted, 183 *n.*
Herald's *Visitation of Shropshire* cited, 107, 272
Herbert, Humphrey, schoolmaster, of Ludlow, 154
——George, the poet, 274
——Lord, of Chirbury, 162, 207, 274
—— —— ——*Autobiography* cited, 274
Hermits in Shropshire, 68

Heylin, John, has to sell the Alderton estate after the Civil War, 194, 248
——Rowland, pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Hiding-places in sixteenth century houses, 248
High Ercall, 62, 189, 190, 191
——Church, 250, 252
Hill, Richard, the diplomatist, pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
——Rowland, Lord Mayor of London, founder of Market Drayton Grammar School, 226, 271
—— ——(afterwards Lord Hill), of Hawkestone, 271
——Sir Richard, of Hawkestone, 117
Hill Wakes, 133
Hinton, capture of the King's Commission at, 186
History, General, of the county, 1-23
  Celtic and Saxon periods, 1-12
  Norman period, 12-17
  Plantagenet period, 17-20
  Tudor period, 20, 21
  Stuart and Hanoverian periods, 21-23
History of Music, written by Dr. Charles Burney, 259
Hockstow Deer Forest, 195
Hodnet, 61, 208, 263
——Castle, existence of, revealed by modern research, 196
Holbeche, David, founder of Oswestry Grammar School, 218
Holinshed cited, 269
Hopton Castle, 176, 177
——Heath, battle of, 168
Hotspur, slain at the battle of Shrewsbury, 19
Hours of school attendance in former days, 218, 221, 227, 231
House of Lords, how constituted and how summoned in early times, 201
Houses, Basil Wood's list of country, 205
——black and white, half-timbered, found all over the county, 208
Howard, Sir Richard, Royalist leader, 193
How, William Walsham, Bishop of Wakefield, 265
Howell, Abraham, schoolmaster of Ashford, 233
Hughley Church, fourteenth century, 244
—— ——fifteenth century screen, 245
Hulbert's *Manual of Shropshire Biography* cited, 271
Human remains found, in 1839, at Buttington, the scene of an early battle, 11
Humphreston, estate of, changed hands owing to the Civil War, 194
——traces of house of Saxon franklin at, 236
Humphreys, Humphrey, Bishop of Bangor, pupil of Oswestry Grammar School, 218
Hundreds, Shropshire divided at Domesday into, 14, 15
—— ——revised by Henry I., 16
Hunkes, Sir Fulke, Royalist leader, 182
Hunt, Colonel Thomas, of Shrewsbury, a Parliamentarian leader, 162, 163, 167, 168, 171, 187, 188, 190
——a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Huson, a minister, assists at the capture of Shrewsbury, 187

Iberian racial types, marks of the, 3
Idsal House school, Shifnal, 228
Idsall, see *Shifnal*
Illustrious Salopians, 257-274
——pupils of Shrewsbury School, 224-226
Income of Shropshire landowners formerly and now, 203, 204
——religious houses, 197
Indifference, Salopian, to religious change, 102, 106, 108
Informator Rusticus quoted, 175
Inscription on Ludlow Castle, 150
Invasions of Shropshire, successive, 2-14
Ippikin, a legend concerning Wenlock Edge, 127
Ironbridge, 59

Iron industry, the, in Shropshire, 54, 59
—rails first made in Shropshire, 59
Isle, the, shows the sequence of building often followed, 253
Ivanhoe referred to, 86
Ive, Roger, builds Battlefield church, 245

Jacobean design of Moreton Corbet Hall, 208
——pulpits, 252
James I. on "dangerous novelties," 153
——II. dismantled Shrewsbury Castle, 29
——took away the town charter of Shrewsbury, 23
——visits Shrewsbury, 23
Jeffreys, Judge, arbitrary measures of, 22
—— ——a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 23, 225
—— ——tries Richard Baxter, 110
John Inglesant referred to, 174
John, King, 17, 27, 36, 52, 53
—— ——grants a charter to Shrewsbury, 15, 23, 27
Johnes, Thomas, translator of Froissart, pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Jones, Alexander Fletcher, the first exhibitioner from Oswestry to the University, 218
——Colonel, R.E., V.C., pupil of Oswestry Grammar School, 219
——Thomas, Senior Wrangler, a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225

Katharine of Aragon, 21, 100
Kelly's *Directory of Shropshire* cited, 206
Kennedy, Dr. B. H., headmaster of Shrewsbury School, 224, 226
—— ——his words quoted, 218
Kenwealh, King of Wessex, battle of Pontesbury under, 9
Kenyon, first Baron, Chief Justice, 272
Kilsall, legend concerning, 129
Kingsland, Shrewsbury, in olden times, 139
——the finest site for a school in England, 224
Kinlet church, chancel and transepts of fourteenth century, 244
——Hall, eighteenth century house, 254
Kirke, Sir Lewis, captures Hopton Castle, 177
—— ——Governor of Ludlow, 190
Knights Hospitallers, 85
——of St. John, house of, 196
——Templars, 86, 87
Knockin, 62
——Heath, legend concerning, 127
—— ——military rendezvous at, 182
—— ——Royalist victory at, 189
Kynaston Family, the, 52
——Wild Humphrey, 127
—— —— ——legendary leap of, 127

Lacy, Roger de, probably built Ludlow Castle, 29
"Lady of the Mercians," the, Ethelfleda, erected fortresses at Bridgnorth and Chirbury, 12, 236
——Godiva, 72
Land in Shropshire, changes in ownership of, 195-209
Langford, Charles, founds exhibitions at Ludlow Grammar School, 218
Langland, William, poet, probably a Salopian, 91-93, 260
Langley Chapel, early seventeenth century, 252
Lansdowne MSS. quoted, 141
Latham, Edward, captured at the siege of Bridgnorth, 193
Latimer, Thomas, a Lollard, 96
Laud, Archbishop, 105
Laurence de Ludlow, 30, 240
—— ——buys Stokesay, 30
—— ——obtains royal license to crenellate it, 30, 240
——Thomas, headmaster of Shrewsbury School, 221, 222, 224
Lawyers of Shropshire, distinguished, 272, 273

Laying Ghosts, the process of, 122, 123
Lea, Danes abandon their ships on the river, 11
Lea Hall abandoned by the Royalists, 189
Leach's *English Schools at the Reformation* quoted, 212, 213
Lead Mines worked by the Romans at Stiperstones, 5
Leaders of the Parliamentary party in Shropshire, 207
Leasowes, The, the house of Shenstone, the poet, 81
Leebotwood, 62
Lee Bridge, engagement at, 173
——Rowland, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, 21, 146-148, 157, 266, 272
——Sir Richard, of Langley, Royalist leader, 169
Leeke, Thomas, Baron of the Exchequer, founded High Ercall School, 232
Legend as to the capture of Uriconium, 7
Legends of the county, 120-142
Leighton Hall, near Ironbridge, eighteenth century, 254
——Church, eighteenth century, 254
——Sir Wm., Judge, remodelled Plash Hall in 1607, 250, 272
Leintwardine, a stage on the southward royal journey from Shrewsbury, 26
Leland's *Itinerary* cited, 31, 34, 37, 39, 41, 43, 46, 48, 49, 51, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, 202, 203, 218
——list of Shropshire landowners in his day, 202
Le Strange family, the, 52
Levere, Robert, a merry host of Newport, 47
Leveson, Sir Richard, Royalist officer, 179
Lewis, Edward, builds and endows village school at Chirbury, 233
Licenses to crenellate issued, 30, 239-242
Lichfield Close, siege of, 168
——; St. Chad first Bishop of, 66
Lilleshall Abbey, 28, 78-80, 178-180, 191, 196, 238
Lindisfarne, 66, 67
Lingen, Baron, a pupil of Bridgnorth Grammar School, 216
Lister, Lady, gallant defence of Rowton Castle by, 188
——Sir Thomas, of Rowton, a prominent Royalist, 166
Lives lost in Shropshire through the Civil War, 193
Llanymynech, copper mines worked by the Romans at, 5
Llewelyn the Great, 17, 52, 81
——ap Gruffydd, 18
Lloyd, Andrew, 174, 187, 188, 190
——Colonel, of Llanforda, *bon vivant*, 175
——Richard, of Welshpool, 147
Llynclys, legend concerning, 129
Local life and feeling always strong in Shropshire, 23
Lodge, Sir Oliver, a pupil of Newport School, 231
——The, an eighteenth century house, 254
Lollards in Shropshire, the, 95-98
Longden, 61
Long Mountain, British earthworks on, 8
Longdon-on-Tern, church rebuilt in eighteenth century, 255
Longford reduced by the Royalists, 180
Longnor Hall, Church, Park, and Mill, 241, 253
Loppington Church, fortified and defended, 172
Lord Mayors of London, many Salopian, 271
Lords, House of, how constituted, and how summoned in early times, 201
Loton, seventeenth century house, 250
Ludford Bridge, the rout of, 144
Ludlow, its social season in the eighteenth century, 23
——and the Council of the Marches, 143-161
——captured by Earl of Essex, 165
——Carmelites and Austin Friars at, 90
——defence of in Civil War, 169
——Grammar School, short history of, 214, 215

Ludlow had two representatives in Parliament, 201
——its history, trade, and development, 29-31
——mentioned in *Domesday*, 26
——Museum, 158
——rope-pulling contest at, 64, 135
——stately ceremonial at, 153
——the chief seat of the Mortimer power, 144
——tourist's letter of eighteenth century, describing, 23
——town gaol, 160
——visited by Charles I., 191
Ludlow Advertiser quoted, 157
Ludlow Castle, 16, 29
—— ——Arthur, Prince of Wales, holds Court at, 21
—— ——besieged, 189, 193
—— ——last of the King's garrisons in Shropshire, 193
—— ——unsuccessful attack on, 189
——Church, mainly of the fourteenth century, 243
—— ——tower built fifteenth century, 246
Ludstone Hall, seventeenth century building, 208, 250
Lutwyche Hall, old brick sixteenth century mansion, 247
——Sir Edward, Judge, 272
Lydbury Castle, see *Bishop's Castle*
——North, old village school at, 233
—— ——has sixteenth century screen, 245
Lydley Heys, establishment of the Templars at, 86, 196
Lyon, Captain, killed, 178
Lythwood Hall, near Shrewsbury, eighteenth century house, 254

Mabel de Belesme, first wife of Roger de Montgomery, 14
Mackworth, Colonel Humphrey, Parliamentary leader, 167, 171, 190, 193
—— ——a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Madeley, 59, 60, 117, 255
——Church, rebuilt in 1796, 255
——Court, fine example of old house, 208, 247, 272
Madeley House, abandoned by the Royalists, 189
Maesbury, 35, 238
Magna Charta, 17
Malins Lee, ruined Norman Chapel at, 238
Manor houses built in thirteenth century instead of fortified castles, 239
—— ——destroyed in the Civil War, 193
McMichael, William, pupil of Bridgnorth Grammar School, 216
Manors existing at the Conquest named in *Domesday Survey*, 14
Map of Basil Wood of 1715 cited, 205
——C. Saxton, showing list of Elizabethan parks, cited, 204
——Samuel Brown, of 1751, cited, 204
Marbury, William, headmaster of Oswestry School, 218
Market Hall, Shrewsbury, statue of Duke of York, 20
—— —— ——old, finished in 1596, 247
——Drayton, its history and antiquities, 56, 57, 176
—— ——Church, improved in 1796, 255, 256
—— ——Grammar School, short history of, 224-226
Markets granted, 40, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49-55, 57-63
——for time of plague, 62
Marquis of Halifax, "the great trimmer," pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Marrington Hall, example of half-timbered sixteenth century work, 247
Marrow, Colonel, Royalist leader, 182
——Major, Parliamentary officer, killed at the storming of Wem, 173
Marches, history of the Council of the, 143-161
Marsh, near Westbury, example of black and white house, 208
Marsley Park, scene of the Royal hunt, 26, 29
Marston Moor, battle of, 182

Mary Tudor at Ludlow, 145, 146
—— ——at Shrewsbury, 257
Maserfield, near Oswestry, Oswald defeated and slain at, 8
Masons, bands of, in the fourteenth century, 244
Matilda's cause during the Anarchy espoused by most Shropshire nobles, 16
Matthew Paris quoted, 74, 75
Matthews, G. B., Senior Wrangler, pupil of Ludlow Grammar School, 215
Maurice, Prince, appointed Royalist Commander-in-Chief in Shropshire, 185, 186
Meighen, John, headmaster of Shrewsbury School, 222, 225
Melverley Church, half-timbered structure of fifteenth century, 208, 245
Mennes, Sir John, Royalist leader, 169
Merchant Gilds, 28, 33, 47
Mercia, Rise of the kingdom of, 8
Meres, legends concerning Shropshire, 129-131
Mermaid, the, of Aqualate Mere, 130
—— ——Childs Ercall, 130
Methodism in Shropshire, 111, 114-119
Middleton, Sir Thomas, of Chirk, appointed Parliamentary Commander, 170-173, 182, 189
Milburga founds Wenlock Abbey, 237
Military Orders, the, in Shropshire, 85-87
Milton cited, 131, 132
Mining on the Stiperstones, 195
Minsterley, quaint seventeenth century church at, 253
Mint, the old, in Shrewsbury, 243
Mitchell's Fold, 126
Mitrailleuses (" drakes ") used in the siege of Shrewsbury, 171
Moat Hall, example of small manor house, 248
Moated residences, 195, 239-242
Monastic houses, increase of, during the Anarchy, 16
Monasticism in Shropshire, 68-87
Monasticon, The, of Dugdale, cited, 196
Monkbridge, a boundary, 202
Montague, John, a Shropshire Lollard, 96
Montford Bridge, the passage of the Severn forced at, 182
——Church, rebuilt in 1736, 255
Montgomery, rout of Royalist forces at, 183
More, Samuel, of Linley, gallant defence of Hopton, 176, 177
—— ——a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Moreton Corbet, 51, 175, 208, 248
—— ——Castle captured by the Parliament, 183, 184
—— —— —dismantled by the Parliament, 189
——Say Church cased with brick in eighteenth century, 255
Morris-dancers, 139, 140
Mortality through the Civil War, 193
Mortimer family, the, 14, 17, 48, 49, 243
——Hugh de, holds three castles besieged by Henry II., 17
——Ralph de, owns manors in Shropshire, 14
——Roger de, 243
Mortimer's Cross, battle of, 20
Morville Priory, 70
Mothering Sunday, 140
Moultrie, John, poet, 264
Much Wenlock, see *Wenlock*
Mummers, the (or Guisers), 139
Municipal life of Shrewsbury, 26-28
——Government, growth of, 201
Museum at Shrewsbury, early remains in the, 2
Musicians of Shropshire, 259
Myddle, mortality of soldiers from, during Civil War, 193
——*History of*, by Gough, quoted, 169, 175
——old castle at, 243
——old village school at, 233
Myrk, John, Canon of Lilleshall, poetry of, quoted, 79, 260
Mytton, Jack, of Halston, 253
——Thomas, of Halston, Parliamentary leader, 170-188, 270

Namby-Pamby, nickname of the Shropshire poet, Ambrose Phillips, 262
Nantwich, unsuccessful Royalist attack on, 168, 172
Nash Church, fourteenth century work, 243
Needham, Captain, killed at the capture of Shrewsbury, 188
Needle's Eye on the Wrekin, 134
Neen Sollars Church, fourteenth century work, 243
Nesscliff, legend concerning, 127
Netley Hall, built in 1857, 256
Neutral soldiers during the Civil War, 185
Nevett, Rowland, of Oswestry, 108
Newborough, see *Newport*
New Learning, The, 99
Newport, history and antiquities of, 47, 48, 62, 190
——Grammar School and short history of, 230-232
——Sir Francis, of High Ercall, a great builder, 273, 274
——Sir Richard (afterwards Lord Newport), of High Ercall, 163, 166, 270
—— ——unsuccessful attempt to capture his manor house, 189
——the Mermaid of, 130
Newsletters, mostly in the interest of Parliament during the Civil War, 167, 175, 178
Newton, Sir C. T., the antiquary, a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 226
Nicholas de Denton, a Shropshire hermit, 68
Nichols, Thomas, of Shrewsbury, accused of treason, 167
Nicostrata Carmenta, school-book used in early times, 211
Nonconformist chapels in eighteenth century, generally of very simple architecture, 255
Norfolk, Duke of, buys the Castle of Clun, 202
Norman architecture, traces of, 237-239
——invasion, effect of, 1
——period, history of the, 12-17
——Venator, 45
Normans, manors named in *Domesday Book* mostly held by, 14
Northampton, Earl of, Royalist Commander, killed, 168
Norton, near Condover, Henry I. signed two documents at, 15
——Bonham, a benefactor to Church Stretton, 41
——Camp, legend concerning, 126
——Mrs. Jane, built west end of Church Stretton church, 252
——near Stokesay, battle of, 190
——William, founds elementary school at Onibury, 232
Nottingham, Charles I. raises his standard at, 163

Oakengates, 59, 60
Odelerius, chaplain of Roger de Montgomery, 70, 71
Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, appointed Regent by William I., 13
Offa builds the great dyke known by his name, 10
——reigns over Mercia from 757 to 796, 10
——wrests Pengwern from the Welsh, 10
Oldbury, castle built by Ethelfleda at, 31, 236
Oldcastle, Sir John, the Lollard (Lord Cobham), 96-98
"Olde House," the, on Dogpole where Mary Tudor stayed, 247
Old, rarity of things really, 208, 209
Old Shropshire families, changes in, 195-209
Onibury, endowed elementary school at, 232
Onslow family, distinguished in Shropshire, 272
——Hall, built about 1820, 256
Ordericus Vitalis educated at Shrewsbury, 211
—— ——quoted, 32, 50, 67, 211
Orders, the monastic, in Shropshire, 68-87
Ordovices, British tribe of, 3
Orleton, near Wellington, 247
Ostorius Scapula, victorious over Caractacus, 4
Oswald, King of Northumbria, slain at Maserfield, 8, 66

Oswestry, history, trade, and antiquities of, 35-37
——captured for the Parliament, 180, 181
——defeat of Oswald by Penda's men, 8
——defence of, during the Civil War, 170, 181, 182
——first incorporated in Shropshire in 1537, 202
——: hill country behind, mostly inhabited by Welsh, 10
——: incident of crusading times at, 84
——: the name derived from Oswald's tree, 8
——: unsuccessful stratagem at, 175
——Grammar School, short history of, 217-219
—— —— ——distinguished pupils of, 218, 219
—— —— —— the first public school in Shropshire unconnected with a religious house, 212
Oteley, the White Lady of, 129
Ottley, Sir Francis, of Pitchford, a prominent Royalist leader, 21, 163, 167, 169, 175, 186, 193, 270
—— ——a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Owen, George, of Henllys, 152
——Archdeacon Hugh, joint author of the *History of Shrewsbury*, 258
——Glyndwr in rebellion, 19
——Goronwy, the Welsh poet, a pupil of Donington Grammar School, 230
——Leighton, 174
——Rev. E. Price, 258
——Roger, 186
——Sir Roger, antiquary, 273
——Sir William, of Condover, 174, 187
——Thomas, Judge, who built Condover Hall, 272, 273
——William, R.A., pupil of Ludlow Grammar School, 215, 258
Owen and Blakeway's *History of Shrewsbury* cited, 95, 97, 258
Owen's Mansion, Shrewsbury, built sixteenth century, 247
Owens, the, of Condover, waverers in the Civil War, 207
Ownership of land in Shropshire, changes in the, 195, 209

Pageant, Annual, at Shrewsbury, 136-138
Pageants of Shrewsbury School, 222
Painters of Shropshire, 257-258
Palmers' Gild found a Grammar School at Ludlow, 214
Palsgrave in *John Inglesant* intended to represent Prince Rupert, 174
Pantulf, the family of, 50, 56
Papal supremacy overthrown, 100
Pardoners, evil influences of the, 92
Park Hall, Oswestry, example of black and white timbered architecture, 208, 247
——Chapel, example of black and white ecclesiastical building, 208
Parks in Shropshire in Elizabeth's reign and since, 204, 205
Parliament, famous, held by Edward I. at Shrewsbury in 1283, 18, 28
——adjourned to Acton Burnell, 18, 238
——representation of Shropshire in, 201
Parliamentary Committee of Twenty appointed for Shropshire, 170, 178
—— ——list of successes of, 190 191
——party in Shropshire, leaders of the, 207
Paulet, Lord, taken prisoner at Bridgnorth, 166
Payne, Edward, headmaster of Oswestry Grammar School, 219
Peasants' revolt of 1381, the, 94
Peerage, modern of Shropshire, 197, 198
Peers, House of, how constituted, and how summoned in early times, 201
Pembridge, Elizabeth, builds Tong Church in the fifteenth century, 245
——Fulke, of Tong, 243

Pembroke, Earl of, 151, 152
Penda defeats and slays Oswald at Maserfield, 8
——champion of heathenism, 9
Pengwern, the earliest name of British Shrewsbury, 7, 10
——a flourishing centre of Celtic power, 8
Penry, John, Puritan, author of the *Martin Mar-prelate Tracts*, a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 204
Percy, Bishop, author of *The Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, 265
—— ——pupil of Bridgnorth Grammar School, 216, 247
Perfect Occurrences quoted, 191
Perfect Passages quoted, 186
Periods of Shropshire history—
  1. Celtic and Saxon, 1-12
  2. Norman, 12-17
  3. Plantagenet, 17-20
  4. Tudor, 20, 21
  5. Stuart and Hanoverian, 21-23
Perrott, Sir Richard, pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Peter de Rupibus, founder of Halesowen Abbey, 81
——the Hermit, 82
Petsey, near Hodnet, old house, 251
Petton Church rebuilt in 1727, 265
Peverel, William, 83
Phillips, Ambrose, poet, pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225, 262
——Fabian, 150
——Major, gallant defence of Hopton, 177
Phillips' *History of Shrewsbury* quoted, 102, 103, 114
Picot de Say, Lord of Clun, 38
Pictures, church, burning in Market Square of, 101, 102
Pierpoint, Lady, endows cottage school at Tong, 232
Pierson, Thomas, preacher, at Ludlow, 153
Piers Plowman, by William Langland, 91-93, 260
Pigott, Richard, headmaster of Shrewsbury School, 223, 225
Pigott's Ghost, Madam, 124
Pins thrown into water at wishing wells, 132, 133
Pitchford Church, early thirteenth century building, 242
—— ——has seventeenth century pulpit and pews, 262
——Hall, an example of black and white timbered architecture, 208, 242, 244
Place Names in the county, absence of Danish, 12
Plague Markets, 62
Plantagenet period, history of, 17-20
Plash Hall, one of the oldest houses in Shropshire, 207, 250
Plays, Mediæval, in Shropshire, 137, 138
——Miracle, acted by the Abbot of Shrewsbury's men, 138
Plowden Hall, old house, 208, 248
——Roger de, fell at Acre, 84
Poets of Shropshire, 259-264
Polyolbion (Drayton) quoted, 142
Pontesbury, battle at, under Kenwealh, King of Wessex, 41
——Church, has fourteenth century chancel, 244
Pontesford Hill, legends concerning, 133
Pool Hall, near Alveley, seventeenth century building, 250
Population, 28, 60, 195
Pottery manufacture, 60
Powell, of Oswestry, 150
Powis, Shrewsbury the early capital of the Princes of, 8
Powys, Sir Thomas, an eminent Judge, 272
—— ——Littleton, an eminent Judge, 272
——Thomas, Solicitor-General, pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Precisians, the, 104
Preece, Sergeant (*alias* Scroggan), 175, 176
Preen, 73
Prees Heath, Royalist encampment at, 172
Premonstratensian Order, the, 81
Presbyterianism, 105-108
Presbyteries, Classical, 106, 107
Presidents of the Council of the Marches, 144-148

Preston Brockhurst changed hands owing to the Civil War, 194, 251
——on-the-Wild-Moors Church, with hospital, both early eighteenth century, 255
Price, Sampson, ***malleus hæreticorum***, a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
——Sir John, captures the Royal Commission at Hinton, 186
Primogeniture democratic in its effects, 201
Prince, Richard, built Whitehall, Shrewsbury, in 1578, 248
Princes, boy, smothered in the Tower, 20
Priories, Grandmontensian, 196
Prior of St. John's Hospital, Shrewsbury, 28
Priors' Lodging at Wenlock, 73, 207, 244, 245
Priory of Wenlock founded by Roger de Montgomery, 14
Private Schools early established in the larger towns, 212
Prosperity of Shropshire under the Roman occupation, 6
—— ——in Elizabeth's reign, signs of, 248
Pulverbatch, 61, 140
Pupils, famous, of Shrewsbury School, list of, 224-226
Puritanism, 98, 103

Quakerism in Shropshire, 111-114
Quaker meeting house in Shrewsbury, 113
Quatford, Danes at, 11
——the first borough founded after the Conquest, 31, 32
"Queen of Hearts," daughter of James I., 250

Racial types, difference between earliest, 3
Rarity of things really old, 208, 209
Ratlinghope Priory, 81
Raven's Bowl on Wrekin, 134
Rea Valley, settlements of West Saxons in the, 9
Recorders of Ludlow, 160
Rees, Griffith ap, whipped publicly at Ludlow, 160
Reformation, the English, 20, 98-111
Regents appointed during the Conqueror's absence, 13
Regiment of Dragoons raised in the county, 167
Reinking, Colonel, Parliamentary leader, 183, 186-188, 190, 191
Religious Movements, mediæval and post-mediæval, 65, 119
——Houses in Shropshire, Stevens' list of, 195
—— —— ——their changed condition to-day, 197
Remembrances, Cromwell's, cited, 146
Representation of Shropshire in the House of Commons, 201
Representative buildings in Shropshire, 236-256
——government, growth of, in the towns, 201
Republicanism in England, 104
Restoration, Shropshire at the, 22
Reynerius, Bishop of St. Asaph, 84
Rhys' *Celtic Folklore* cited, 141
Richard I., 27, 43
——II., 56, 58, 60
——III., 20
——Duke of York, father of Edward IV., 20, 144
Richard's Castle, 12
Rich, Lord Chancellor, petitioned to found a public school in Shrewsbury, 220
Road, New, over Wenlock Edge, made by Henry I., 15
Roads, Roman, 5
Roaring Bull of Bagbury, the 122
Robert de Belesme, 15, 27, 50, 51, 53, 82
——Curthose, 15, 82
Robin Hood's Arrow, 128
—— ——Butts, 128
Robson, William, benefactor of Newport Grammar School, 230
Robyns, Richard, headmaster of Newport Grammar School, 230
Roderick, Richard, M.A., first headmaster of Wem Grammar School, 229
Roger de Clinton, founder of Buildwas Abbey, 74, 83

Roger de Montgomery, kinsman of the Conqueror, 13-15
—— ——appointed Earl of Shrewsbury, 13
—— ——builds Shrewsbury Castle, 26
—— ——founds Shrewsbury Abbey, 70, 71
—— ——is buried in Shrewsbury abbey, 14
—— ——led right wing of the Conqueror's army at Hastings, 267
Roger de Plowden, fell at the capture of Acre, 84
Roman city of Uriconium, 4, 5
——architecture, traces of in some old buildings, 237
——civilization and its effects, 5, 6
——mining on Stiperstones, 195
——occupation, 3-6
Rope-pulling contest at Ludlow, 64, 135
Rorrington Holy Well, 133
"Roscius, The Young," 265
Rowton Castle, gallant defence by Lady Lister of, 188, 256
Royal House in England represented in 800 years by seven different families, 200
Royal visits to Shropshire:—
  Charles I., 21, 164-167, 190-192
  Edward I., 18
  Ethelred, 1
  Henry I., 15, 16, 27, 238
  ——II., 17, 27
  ——IV., 19
  James II., 23
  Prince Arthur, 144
  Richard II., 28
  Stephen, 16, 27
Rupert, Prince, Royalist leader, 21, 171, 174, 176, 180-184
Rushbury, 61
——Church has Roman work in it, 237
Ruyton XI. Towns, history and antiquities of, 40

Sabrinæ Corolla referred to, 226
Salopian Shreds and Patches quoted, 23
Salop, name of both town and county, see *Shrewsbury* and *Shropshire*
Sandford, eighteenth century house, 254
Saxon dispossession very complete, 14
——and Celtic periods, history of the, 1-12
——settlement of Shropshire, extent of, 9, 14, 15
——work, evidences of, in many churches, 237
Saxton's list of parks in Shropshire during Elizabeth's reign, 204
Saville, Sir George, "the great "trimmer," a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Schools, endowed, for village elementary education, 232, 233
——Grammar, of Shropshire, 212-232
——Shropshire, the, 210-235
School, the Shrewsbury, see *Shrewsbury School*
——hours in former times, 218, 221, 227, 231
Scott, Captain Jonathan, of Betton, 117
Scriven, Sir Thomas, of Frodesley, mortally wounded at Lee Bridge, 173
—— —— ——a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Scromail, British leader, defeated by Ethelfrith at Chester, 8
Seagrave, John de, lord of the manor of Stottesdon, 244
Self-sacrifice, heroic, of a boy at Bridgnorth Grammar School, 216, 217
Sequestration Committee Report at close of Civil War, 174
Seventeenth century woodwork, 252
Severn, Danes went up as far as Buttington, 11
——legends concerning the, 126
Shakespeare, quoted, 85
——reference to the battle of Shrewsbury, 19
Shavington, 253
Shawbury, 236
——Church, tower built in fifteenth century, 246
Shaw's *Church under the Commonwealth* cited, 106, 107

Shelve, 61
Shenstone, William, the poet, 81, 262, 263
—— ——pupil of Halesowen Grammar School, 232
Sherar, Thomas, Clerk of the Court of the Marches, 247
Sheriffhales, a provincial University founded at, 243
Shifnal, history and antiquities of, 44, 45
——Church, 238, 244, 250
——Grammar School, 228
Shipman, John, founds a village school at Lydbury North, 233
Shipton, example of old house, 208, 247
——Church chancel built in 1589, 256
Shire, General history of the, see *Shropshire*
Shrawardine, 90, 252
——Castle, 63, 190, 193
——*Register* cited, 190, 194
Shrewsbury:—
  A flourishing centre of Celtic power, 8
  Attacked by Wild Edric, 13
  Belesme's rebellion suppressed at, 15
  Besieged and captured by Stephen, 16
  ——during the Civil War, 171
  Brother of Edward V. born at, 20
  Captured by Llewelyn the Great, 18
  ——the Parliament, 186-188
  Charter taken away by James II., 22
  Council of War held at, 196
  Defence of in the Civil War, 21, 169, 186-188
  Early names of, 1, 7, 10
  Fine houses built in the sixteenth century in, 246, 247
  Foiled attempt by Mytton to capture, 182; successful, 186-188
  Grey Friars, Black Friars, and Austin Friars at, 89, 90
  Had two representatives in Parliament, 201
  Inhabited by refugees from Uriconium, 25
Shrewsbury—
  Local feeling and social traditions of in eighteenth century, 23, 24
  Loyal to King John, 17, 18
  Many traitors, during Civil War in, 174, 176, 186, 187
  Mentioned as a town in *Domesday*, 26
  Once proposed to be made a Bishop's see, 220
  —— ——University town, 233, 234
  Ordericus Vitalis educated at, 211
  Parliament of 1283 held at, 18, 28
  ——1397 held at, 28
  Private schools early established in, 212
  Reached its greatest importance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, 29
  Received privileges from Henry I., 15
  Riot between troops and townsmen, 174
  Royal visits to, see *Royal Visits*
  Show, Annual, of trading gilds, 136-138
  Statue erected to Richard, Duke of York, 20
  Troops in state of mutiny for arrears of pay, 186
——Abbey, 14, 70, 196, 246
——Castle erected by Roger de Montgomery, 13
—— ——dismantled by James II., 29
—— ——held during the Anarchy for Matilda, 16
——School built in seventeenth century, 251
—— ——distinguished pupils of, 21, 184, 224-226
—— ——headmasters of, 220-224
—— ——lends £600 to King Charles I., 166, 223
—— ——removed to Kingsland, 224
—— ——short history of, 220-226
Shrewsbury (Auden's) cited, 71, 101, 260
——*Chronicler* cited, 148

Shrewsbury, John Talbot, Earl of, 43, 267-269
Shropshire:—
  Christianity probably due to Celtic missionaries, 66
  Civil War in, 162-194
  Early names of, 1
  General history of:—
    1. Celtic and Saxon periods, 1-12
    2. Norman period, 12-17
    3. Plantagenet, 17-20
    4. Tudor, 21-28
    5. Stuart and Hanoverian, 21-23
  Largely Royalist under Charles I., 21
  Royal visits to, see *Royal Visits*
  Schools, 210-235
  Social changes in, 14, 23, 24
——Archæological Society's *Transactions* cited, 46, 49 78, 84, 90, 97, 101, 102, 139, 269
——*Folk-Lore* (Miss Burne's), cited, 7, 67
Sidney (Sydney), Sir Henry, 21, 148-151, 157, 160, 222
—— ——Sir Philip, 148, 224
—— —— ——a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 21, 224
—— ——Ambrozia, 148, 158
—— ——Mary, 148, 149
Siege of Lichfield Close, 168
——Shrewsbury, 171
Silchester, 65
Silures, the British tribe of the, 3
Simnel Cakes, 140
——Sunday, 140
Simon, Thomas, the King's engraver, 156
Sixteenth century marked by building houses rather than churches, 246
Skeel's *Council in the Marches of Wales* cited, 161
Slaney, Mr., founds an elementary school at Barrow, 232
Smyth, Bishop, founder of Brasenose College, 145
Social changes in Shropshire, 14
Social England quoted, 15
Society of Friends in Shropshire, 111-114
Soldiers, distinguished, of Shropshire, 267-271
Soulton Hall, seventeenth century erection, 254
Sources of Shropshire Christianity, 65-67
Speed's Map referred to, 204-238
Spoliation of parochial endowments for monastic uses, 78, 79
Sprenchose, Roger, builds the first Longnor Hall, 241
St. Aidan, 66, 67
St. Alkmund, 12, 42, 67, 78, 79, 246, 255
St. Augustine of Hippo, 75
St. Benedict, 69
St. Chad, 28, 66, 67, 255
St. Cuthbert, 67
St. Dominic, 88, 89
St. Dunstan, 69
St. Evroul, 56
St. Francis, 88, 89
St. Juliana, 67, 246, 255
St. Laurence, 143, 148, 154, 158, 246
St. Mary, 167, 246, 252
St. Milburga, 55, 72, 73, 237
St. Oswald, 8, 9, 35, 132
St. Owen, 67
St. Sampson, 66
St. Sulien, 67
St. Winifrede, 71
Stafford, Charles I. passes through, 164
Staffords, strange fatality in the family of the, 200
Stage Plays out of doors, 139
Stanton Lacy Church, 237, 244
Stanwardine Hall, early seventeenth century building, 250
Stapeley Hill, legend concerning milch cow on, 126
Stapleton Church, early thirteenth century, 242
——moat house, 241, 242
——mound, near church, 242
Star Chamber abolished, 153
Statutes, interesting, of Grammar School at Market Drayton, 227
—— ——Grammar School at Newport, 231
—— ——Grammar School at Oswestry, 218
—— ——Grammar School at Shrewsbury, 221
Stephen de Blois, Anarchy under, 16

Stephen de Blois besieges and captures Shrewsbury, 16, 27
Stevens' list of religious houses in Shropshire, 196
Stevenson, Richard, benefactor of Donington Grammar School, 230
Stiperstones, lead mining under the Romans on, 3, 195
——legends concerning the, 128
——mining on the, 195
Stoke St. Milborough, Heath chapel, 239
Stokesay bought by Laurence, of Ludlow, 30, 240
——Castle, legend concerning, 126, 190
——changes in ownership of, 199
——Church, 252
——Lord Craven of, 162, 250
Stottesdon, 62, 237
——Church, contains Saxon work, 62, 237
—— ——contains, in chancel and south aisle, Decorated work, 244
Strange, Hamo le, Lord of Stretton, 85
Stuart period, history of the, 21, 22
Stury, Richard, a Lollard, 96, 97
Summers, Will, jester of Henry VIII., 264
Sundorne Castle shows revival of Gothic ideas, 256
Sunny Gutter, near Ludlow, the scene of the *Comus*, 132
Superstitions, gradual decay of old, 120
Swinfield, Richard de, Bishop of Hereford, 80
——*Household Expenses of*, quoted, 81

Tacitus' *Agricola* quoted, 210
——account of the defeat of Caractacus, 4, 5
Talbot, John, the great Earl of Shrewsbury, 43, 267-269
Tallents, Francis, of Shrewsbury, 108
Tarleton, Dick, the comedian, 264
Tasley Church, fifteenth century screen, 243
Taunton's *English Black Monks of St. Benedict* quoted, 69
Taylor, "Demosthenes," a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Telford, the engineer, designs St. Mary Magdalene's Church, Bridgnorth, 255
Templars, The Knight, 86
Tennyson quoted, 87, 98
Thomas, Bishop of St. Asaph, pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Thorpe, William, the Lollard priest, 95, 96
Three-decker pulpits, 255
Tille's *Yule and Christmas* cited, 141
Titterstone Wake, 135
Tolls levied, 33, 50, 55
Tong, 54, 61, 190, 212, 243
——castle, captured by the Royalists, 180, 254
——Church, early fifteenth century architecture, 245
——endowed elementary school, 232
——hospital, 245
Towers, the great glory of fifteenth century architecture, 246
Townesend family distinguished in county history, 272
——Henry, Recorder of Ludlow, 160
——monument to Sir Robert and Dame Anne in Ludlow Church, 158
Town, the significance of the, in early times, 201
——bailiffs of Shrewsbury, interference with the school, 222, 223
——hall at Bridgnorth, rebuilt during the Commonwealth, 251
Towns, Eighty, mentioned in *Domesday*, 26
——origin and evolution of the, 16, 17, 25-64
——walled, of Shropshire, four in number, 197
—— —— ——their changed condition to-day, 197
Trade, the beginning of, in the towns, 27
Tradition, old, gradually dying away, 120
Trelystan Church, half-timbered fifteenth century work, 245, 246

Trokelow, John de, cited, 96
Troops raised in the county for the King, 167, 168
Tudor period, history of the, 20, 21
Tumulus at Ludlow, 31
Turner, Captain Timothy, Parliamentary officer, 180
——Thomas, headmaster of Worfield Grammar School, 229
Tyllier, Colonel, reduces Tong, 180

Union of England and Wales effected, 147
University once proposed for Shrewsbury, 233, 234
——, provincial, founded at Sheriffhales, 234
Upton Cressett, example of old country house, 208, 247
——Magna Church, tower of, built fifteenth century, 246
Uriconium, the Roman city of, 4-6, 25
——remains of, used for local buildings, 7
Uttoxeter, Charles I. passes through, 164

Vandalism in churches, 255, 256
Vaughan, Captain, of Burlton, killed at Hopton, 177
——Sir William captures Apley Castle, 177-180
—— ——appointed Royalist General of Shropshire, 184
—— ——defeated at Stow-in-the-Wold, 192
—— ——personal bravery at Wem, 184
—— ——pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Vaughan's Mansion in Shrewsbury, 243
Vernon, Sir Harry, rebuilds Tong castle, 243, 245
Vicissitudes of Shropshire families, 200
View Edge, legend concerning, 126
Viking invasion, 1, 10-12
Villages and towns, rise of the, 9
Village schools endowed for elementary education, 232, 233
Viroconium, see *Uriconium*
Vision of Piers Plowman quoted, 91, 92
Visitation of Shropshire, quoted, 107, 272
Vivary (fish pond) at Newport, 47, 130
Voltaire's comparison of Fletcher of Madeley, 117
Voysey, John, Bishop of Exeter, 145

Wakeman, Sir Offley, cited, 139
Wakes in Shropshire, 132-135
——at well sides, 132, 133
——on hill-tops, 132, 135
Walcot, John, endows village school at Lydbury North, 233
Wales, Union of England and, effected, 147
——work of the Council of the Marches in, 143-161
Walker's *Sufferings of the Clergy* cited, 105
Walled towns of Shropshire in mediæval times, 197
Waller, Sir William, Parliamentary General, 170
Wallop, Henry, fierce Republican, 176
Walls of Oswestry, 36, 37
——of Shrewsbury, 27
Walsingham, Sir Francis, 150
——Thomas, 96
Walter the Pennyless, 82
——Edmund, monument of in St. Laurence's Church, Ludlow, 158
War, the Civil, not a class struggle, but one of religion and government, 207
——Council of, held in Shrewsbury, 169
Wareham Castle, where Robert de Belesme died a prisoner, 15
Waring, Edmund, becomes owner of Humphreston after the Civil War, 194
——Edward, Senior Wrangler, pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Wars of the Roses, 19, 20
Water myths, 129-136
Waties, Edmund, monument of, in St. Laurence's Church, Ludlow, 158
Wattlesburgh, 61

Waverers in the Civil War, 207
Waves of conquest passed over the county, 2-14
  1. Prehistoric, 2
  2. Celts, 3
  3. Gauls, 3
  4. Brythons, 3
  5. Roman, 4-6
  6. Saxon, Jute, and Angle, 6-12
  7. Danish, 10-12
  8. Norman, 12-14
Webster, Peter, founded Whittington Grammar School, 232
Weld, John, of Willey, High Sheriff, 162
——Sir John, of Willey, Royalist leader, 169
Wellington, history and antiquities of, 53, 54
——Charles I. makes an important declaration at, 164
——Church captured by Colonel Mytton for Parliament, 178
—— ——rebuilt in 1790, 253
——Grammar School, 216-220
——old market house, now disappeared, 247
Wells, legends concerning, 131, 132
Well, St. Oswald's, at Oswestry, 132
Welsh cloth, trade in, 29
——intermittent wars with the, 17, 19
——settlements in Clun Forest and the hill country behind Oswestry, 10
Welshpool, regiment of Royal horse surprised and cut up at, 183
Wem, history and antiquities of, 50, 51
——Grammar School, short history of, 229
——occupied and fortified during the Civil War, 171
——stormed by the Royalists, 173
——unsuccessful investment of, by the Royalists, 180, 181, 190
Wenlock, history and antiquities of, 54-56, 67
——annual festival, 136
——Edge, new road made by Henry I. over, 15
——had two representatives in Parliament, 201
Wenlock Priory, 14, 72, 73, 237
——Prior's House at, one of the oldest in the county, 207
Wesley, John, in Shropshire, 114-117
Wessex, the kingdom of, 9
Westminster Assembly, 105
Weston, see *Whitchurch*
West Saxons, invasion of, under Ceawlin, 7-9
Whitchurch, history and antiquities of, 42-44
——Church, a dignified eighteenth century building, 254
—— ——the burial-place of John Talbot, the great Earl of Shrewsbury, 269
—— ——fall of, 240
——Grammar School, 220
——headquarters of Royalist army in Civil War, 169
——surprised and captured by Sir William Brereton, 170, 172
——visited by Charles I., 166
White Abbey at Alberbury, 81
——Friars, the, in Shropshire, 90
Whitehall, the, in Shrewsbury, 207, 208, 248
Whiteladies, nunnery near Boscobel, 75
—— ——legends of, 129
Whitgift, Bishop of Worcester, 151
Whitmore, Sir William, of Apley Park, and his sons captured, 186
—— —— ——builds a school and master's house for the Bridgnorth Grammar School, 216
Whittington, described by Leland, 37
——castle held during the Anarchy for Matilda, 16
——Grammar School founded in 1681, 232
——rattle of, 182
Whitton, near Westbury, seventeenth century house, 254
——Court, near Ludlow, example of old house, 208, 250
Wigmore castle besieged and taken by Henry II., 17
Wilcockes, John, headmaster of Oswestry Grammar School, 219

Wild Edric, 13, 37, 128, 131
——Humphrey Kynaston, the outlaw, 129
Wilderhope, a sixteenth century house, 247
Willey Hall, built about 1815, 256
William the Conqueror's rule in Shropshire, 12-14
——de Warren, 42
——Peverel, 83
Williams, John, pupil of Ludlow Grammar School, 215
——J. H., town clerk of Ludlow, 157
——Freeman, Captain, quoted, 237
——William, Speaker, pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Willier, Captain, assists from within at the capture of Shrewsbury, 187
Willis, Sir Richard, Royalist leader, 175
Wingfield, John, Parliamentary leader, 168, 194, 248, 251
Wishing Wells, 131, 132
Witches, a secret society, 122
——frolics, 122
——legends concerning, 126
Withiford manor house, 243
Wolfhere, son of Penda, lays waste the country, 9
Wolsey, Cardinal, 145, 146
Wombridge Priory, 44, 54, 80, 238
Women's appeal at the siege of Oswestry, 181
Wood, Basil, his list of county families, 205, 206
Woodhouse, Austin Friars' settlement at, 90
Woodhouse, Rev. John, head of the provincial University at Sheriffhales, 234
——Sir Michael, Royalist Commander, 168-170
Woodwork, interesting, of the seventeenth century, 252
Woolley, Bishop of Clonfert, a pupil of Shrewsbury School, 225
Wootton, 61
Worcester, Battle of, 21
Worfield Church has chancel of fourteenth century, 244
—— ——fifteenth century spire work, 246
——Grammar School, 228, 229
Worthen, 61
Worthines of Wales (Churchyard) quoted, 143
Wrekin, chief Roman city of Shropshire, near, 4
——legend how the mountain was first formed, 125, 126
——legends concerning the, 124
——Wakes, 134
Wright's *Uriconium* cited, 7
Wrockwardine Church, 244
Wroxeter Church, early cross built into, 236
—— ——has Saxon work and Roman stones, 237, 248
Wycherley, William, dramatist, 261
Wycliffe, John, 94, 95
Wyle Cop, Shrewsbury, Henry VII. slept in a house still remaining on, 20
Wynn, Colonel, killed at the storming of Wem, 173

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